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CONTEMPORARY FRENCH OPINION ON THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

BY
W. REED WEST

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Board of University Studies of the Johns
Hopkins University in Conformity with the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
1922

BALTIMORE

1924



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CONTENTS

Preface	vii
Chapter I. The Issues.....	9
Chapter II. The Trent Affair.....	40
Chapter III. Distress Among the Workmen.....	56
Chapter IV. Proposals of Mediation.....	65
Chapter V. The Armistice Proposal and the Question of Recognition.....	87
Chapter VI. The Confederate Propaganda.....	105
Chapter VII. The Empire in Mexico.....	115
Chapter VIII. From Gettysburg to the Close of the War	130
Chapter IX. Conclusion	150

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PREFACE

The neutrality of the great maritime powers of Europe made possible the victory of the Union in the great crisis of the republic. However, there were times when that neutrality was in danger of being broken, and an appreciation of the development of public opinion in those countries helps in an understanding of the attitude of their governments. Moreover, the opinions of intelligent Europeans upon the issues in dispute are of interest when it is realized that America was looked upon as a battleground upon which were being fought out those principles that were believed to be in dispute on the continent of Europe. The development of English opinion during the period is fairly well known in its outline, but the French phase has suffered comparative neglect, and this is offered in excuse for the present study.

In the preparation of this monograph, a study has been made of the principal French newspapers and other periodicals representing various political groups, and of the debates in the legislature. These have been supplemented by the opinions of observers representing both the Union and the Southern Confederacy, and the original correspondence of the Confederate State Department, the so-called "Pickett Papers," now in the Library of Congress, has been used in this connection.

The matter of references naturally has caused some difficulty, and this has been met by inserting only those that bear directly upon the text, but it is believed that they are representative and quite ample. No attempt has been made to follow the French discussions of the military developments in America as these were frequently based upon erroneous, and always upon tardy, information. The inclusion

of these discussions would only have been confusing and would have clouded the really important issues. Neither has any attempt been made to enter into the diplomatic phases of Franco-American relations, though it is to be hoped that some day, when the French archives are open to the public, this will be done by some investigator.

Finally, while accepting full responsibility for all errors and shortcomings in this monograph, the author desires to express his sense of obligation for suggestions and criticism to Dr. John H. Latané, Dr. John M. Vincent and Professor Gilbert Chinard, of the Johns Hopkins University, and to Dr. Charles C. Tansill of the Library of Congress, to Mr. John C. Fitzpatrick of the Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, for his courtesy, and to Mr. Merle I. Protzman of the George Washington University, who has been kind enough to revise a great many translations for the author.

W. R. W.

CONTEMPORARY FRENCH OPINION ON THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

CHAPTER I

THE ISSUES

Long before the outbreak of our Civil War, the future of the American Union had been the subject of speculation among European observers. History afforded no example of a democracy upon so large a scale, and it was not considered improbable that the Union would be broken up into sections. Even so good a friend of America as De Tocqueville commented upon the gradual weakening of the Federal bond, and the forces of sectionalism were well understood.¹ The Americans were subjecting themselves to an experiment which Europeans would do well to watch.

The revolt of the Southern States intensified this interest. Although things of great importance were taking place in Europe, and developments in Italy, Russia and Germany might well have absorbed the thoughts of intelligent Frenchmen, the American war yielded nothing in importance to these in the editorial comment of the great French newspapers. Events were followed with the closest interest; the issues were discussed from all points of view, and became the subject of bitter controversy.

In abhorrence of slavery, Frenchmen could agree almost without exception. The institution had been abolished in the French colonies in 1848, and their ideas of the situation in

¹ Alexis De Tocqueville, *De la Démocratie en Amérique*, part I, chap. xviii; Michel Chevalier, *Lettres sur l'Amérique du Nord*, letter xxxi, *Symptômes de Révolution*; Philarète Chasles, *Études sur la Littérature et les Mœurs des Anglo-Américains au xix^e Siècle* (*Avenir de l'Amérique Septentrionale et des États-Unis*, sect. 12).

America were influenced greatly by the writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe and William Ellery Channing. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in translation, had been popular in France and it went through several editions. Liberals, especially, accustomed to the defense of individual rights, felt the strongest horror of an institution that was repugnant to all liberal thought. Even the *Constitutionnel*, an Imperialist organ, which was later to become one of the most devoted adherents of the South, said in December, 1860, referring to the surrender of fugitive slaves: "Without doubt, it would appear to be just that a piece of property should be reclaimed everywhere and given back to whomever it belongs. But when that property is a man, one can understand that the citizens of a free state feel some repugnance in arresting the unfortunate individual to deliver him anew to slavery and the whip. . . . As for us, our wishes at the very same time are for the safety of the great American republic and for the gradual diminution of slavery."² A year later, after that paper had definitely thrown its influence upon the side of the South, it said: "There remains the question of slavery. As for us, we believe it useless to protest against the strange imputation of favoring that detestable institution."³ The *Revue Germanique* called the Montgomery constitution "a crime arranged in cold blood, for it rests upon an outrage against human nature and divine justice," the institution of slavery.⁴ The *Pays*, an Imperialist paper, admitted that "certainly, the abolition of slavery is a noble cause to defend and bring to a triumphant conclusion."⁵ The North and South were compared in growth of population, in commerce, the production of writers, artists, and inventors, in the value of improved land, in manufacturing,

² *Constitutionnel*, Dec. 26, 1860, H.-Marie Martin. On this subject of slavery, see also Victor Hugo, letters entitled "John Brown" (1859), "Les Noirs et John Brown" (1860), and "La Médaille de John Brown" (1867), in *Œuvres Complètes* (Hetzel edition), *Actes et Paroles*, vol. ii.

³ *Ibid.*, Dec. 13, 1861, Auguste Vitu.

⁴ *Revue Germanique*, vol. xiv, p. 176, Mar. 15, 1861, Charles Dollfus.

⁵ *Pays*, Nov. 22, 1860, A. Esparbié.

in attraction of free men from the other section, all showing the superiority of the North, which was not cursed with the leprosy of slavery. Why the South could desire slavery when it led to such results was a mystery to most liberals. "Although the history of man is full of cases in which one sees a mysterious and merciless Jupiter deluding those whom he wishes to destroy, perhaps the world has not seen many examples of an equal infatuation."⁶

Not that the peculiar institution of the South did not have some adherents. The *Journal des Débats*, organ of the Orleanists, and perhaps the most influential paper in France, pays them this sarcastic comment: "In our country where a true aristocracy is so cruelly lacking, there are those who imagine that they are giving themselves a varnish of aristocracy by embracing some opinion contrary to natural feeling or the inspiration of good sense. There is nothing more vulgar than not to love slavery, nothing more elegant than, with an air of profundity, to wish its continuance and extension in the world."⁷

Not long after this it notes a more serious manifestation of pro-slavery feeling. *Le Monde*, an organ of the Catholics, had published an article which it attributed to Archbishop Hughes of New York, in which were set forth the extenuating circumstances in favor of slavery. In justice to the Archbishop, however, it should be added that he denied having written the article. In 1861 he went to France where he defended the Union cause. The *Débats* "could not read without a profound disgust, that strange dissertation, la-

⁶ *Journal des Débats*, Apr. 22, 1861, J.-J. Weiss; Correspondant, Jan., 1861, vol. lii, pp. 114-136, Augustin Cochin; *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xxxi, pp. 142-143, 151, Jan. 1, 1861, Élisée Reclus. John Bigelow says of the writer last mentioned: "M. Reclus was about thirty years old when I made his acquaintance in Paris. He was the most violent reactionary against dynastic government that I had ever met. He later became a Socialist and finally a philosophic but not a criminal anarchist. He revolted against conventionalism of all kinds, and, to show his superiority to social prejudices, he married an African lady from Senegal." He was the author of *La Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*, in 20 volumes (*Retrospections of an Active Life*, vol. ii, p. 88).

⁷ *Journal des Débats*, Dec. 7, 1861, Prévost-Paradol.

boriously built upon arguments borrowed from all sources, from philosophy, history, religion, the Bible, and even from the Evangelist," in which the author "while conceding that slavery is not of divine institution" contented himself with demonstrating that it went back to the most remote times, and consoled himself with the thought "that after all, it is the consequence of original sin." The author was accused of concluding that the abolitionists were guilty of desiring "to anticipate the moment when it shall please Providence to bring about a change in the social life of the countries where slavery still exists." "Such," says the *Débats*, "is the resumé of the doctrines that *le Monde* recommends to its readers as 'truths well worthy of their attention.' It is only fitting for the party which has thrown anathema against the most elevated principles and the most precious conquests of modern societies, to the party which has denounced the liberty of the press, liberty of thought, liberty of conscience, as the inventions of Hell; it was only fitting for that party to constitute itself the official defender and the patron of slavery. In stating the fact for the very great edification of the public, we do not have the simplicity to be astonished."⁸ It is to be noted, however, that *le Monde* had only referred with approval to the article. It had not itself openly defended slavery.

The Pays, while condemning slavery in principle, offered historical evidence in extenuation of the institution. This brought out answers by the *Siècle*, organ of the Republicans, and the *Constitutionnel*, which latter called upon the Americans to imitate their ancestors who in the Constitution inscribed the declaration of "the rights of man, without distinction of color or of race," a proposition which the Pays denied.⁹ When attacked by the *Opinion Nationale*, the Pays summed up its position in three points: First, that the founders of the republic had not found slavery incompatible with

⁸ *Ibid.*, Dec. 25, 1861, Louis Alloury. The issue of Feb. 3, 1862, contains the Archbishop's letter disclaiming authorship of the article.

⁹ Pays, Dec. 21, 27, 29, 1860, A. Granier de Cassagnac.

a republic, just as the Romans and Greeks had not; second, that the States had entered the Union with all their local institutions reserved to them, and among the first of these was slavery; third, that all the Presidents and Congresses had protected the States in the institution.¹⁰ At the same time, the *Pays* was defending the censorship of the French press, and the *Gazette de France* accused it of defending the servile cause both for America and France.¹¹ Soon after this, the *Pays* opened its columns to three articles by Paul Pecquet du Bellet, a citizen of the United States, born in New Orleans, who presented the whole argument from the Southern point of view, and called upon Frenchmen not to reserve all their sympathies for the blacks, but to remember that the South was exposed to fears of a slave insurrection.¹²

Prevost-Paradol, of the *Journal des Débats*, one of the most brilliant of French editorial writers, was a consistent defender of the Union. He published a number of letters in the *Courrier du Dimanche*, some of which dealt with the American question. A letter of February 24, 1861, showed a sympathetic understanding of the Southern attitude unusual among the liberals. "Let us suppose that we had received from our fathers our slaves at the same time we received our fields, that there existed for us no other instruments of labor than those docile hands, that we were admitted as possessors of slaves in the great republic by a free contract and without contest; and that after long years of concord, there arose around and against us a sort of sudden gale, preventing us from spreading out equally with our neighbors, holding us back as a plague from the free spaces where we desired to establish ourselves; keeping us at home the better to destroy us, and bringing even into the midst of our slaves,

¹⁰ Ibid., Jan. 3, 1861, A. Granier de Cassagnac.

¹¹ Ibid., Jan. 6, 1861, A. Granier de Cassagnac.

¹² Ibid., Feb. 9, 13, 21, 1861, Paul Pecquet du Bellet. In the Library of Congress is a typewritten copy of this writer's manuscript intended for publication, entitled, "The Diplomacy of the Confederate Cabinet of Richmond and its Agents Abroad," which throws some light upon his own activities.

to the very foot of the domestic altar, menacing words, which in the North would mean liberty, but which would change their sense in coming to servile ears and would mean among us only murder and pillage." But his support of the North is no less strong because of this, for if the North consented to the demands of the South, the struggle would come later and be more terrible. "The atmosphere which we breathe is fatal to slavery." The South is in opposition to the opinion of the whole world. "What is the North in this conflict, but the involuntary and unfortunate instrument of the rest of the world." "The North can not serve by its laws, its customs, its love of concord, as a rampart for slavery and be any longer for the South a kind of protecting belt against that moral contagion."¹³ Whatever palliating circumstances liberals might admit in extenuation of the attitude of the Southerners, their opposition to the institution of slavery itself was uncompromising.

The liberal press of France showed a surprising warmth in the defense of the Union. Articles on the Civil War occupied a prominent place even while events of great importance to France were taking place in Europe. In a large measure, this was due to inability to discuss the internal politics of France. While the decree of November 24, 1860, which permitted the publication of the debates in the Corps Législatif and Sénat upon the Address, is regarded as marking the beginning of the Liberal Empire, still the administrative control of the press remained. Liberals could not carry on a campaign in favor of principles they held at heart. But upon American affairs they could offer praise of the democracy they discreetly held up as an ideal. To them, the North represented freedom and democracy, while the South stood for slavery and aristocracy. Skilful writers, familiar with the intricacies of the censorship, made great success in the method of indirect attack, and to such writers fell the heritage of the clientèle that formerly had belonged to the less adroit editors of the Opposition who succumbed

¹³ *Courrier du Dimanche*, Feb. 24, 1861, Prévost-Paradol.

to the censorship.¹⁴ To them, the Civil War was an opportunity. In America, they believed, there were being fought out those essential principles which they were not free to apply in France. It was a battle of ideals in which they were free to take sides. Union ideals and Northern institutions were held up for admiration.¹⁵ The South stood for those principles which they held detestable. Their readers could draw their own conclusions as to what they desired for France. Sometimes the parallel was too closely drawn, and the official suspicion was aroused. John Bigelow tells us that once upon the publication of two volumes of United States Diplomatic Correspondence, the *Opinion Nationale* published an article, inspired by Bigelow, entitled "American Diplomacy," and dealing with the subject of open diplomacy. The comparatively large volumes of the United States were there contrasted with the French "Yellow Book." Perhaps this paper had been led to such boldness by the fact that it was the organ of the Prince Imperial, and depended upon him for support. Guérault, the chief editor, was called before the Minister of the Interior, with whom was also Chaix d'Estange, who was the Vice-President of the "Commission Municipale" of Paris. The Minister referred to the fact that Guérault had chosen the precise moment when the Yellow Book was being prepared to publish his article, and asked if it was intended as a warning or censure to the government. "The object of this article could hardly have been merely to make a eulogy—a little pompous but perhaps merited—of American diplomacy, but rather to criticise European diplomacy and especially that of France," said the Minister, who added that formerly the Department of Foreign Affairs had given the public nothing while now they gave the Yellow Book, and yet Guérault was not satisfied. The editor replied, "We cannot help contrasting the meagre French *Livre Jaune* with

¹⁴ La Gorce, *Histoire du Second Empire*, vol. iv, p. 198.

¹⁵ "Pourquoi donc voulez-vous déchirer en deux cette radieuse république américaine, la joie et la gloire de l'humanité?" From Eugène Pelletan's "Adresse au Roi Coton."

the large volumes, so complete, published by Mr. Seward." The Minister answered that "one would almost be tempted to think there was a fixed determination or combination to offer the United States always as an example for everything. Only yesterday you were exalting the American municipal system at the expense of ours." D'Estange then asked Guérault if he was entirely sure of the correctness of his information about the municipal organization of the District of Columbia.¹⁶

It is no doubt true, too, that the Opposition took pleasure in supporting the North because it was evident that the Emperor was using his influence in favor of the South. As a matter of politics it was advisable to oppose the government policy. When the American issue was joined to the Mexican venture and Napoleon's plan for the establishment of an American empire was associated with his scheme for aiding in the establishment of Southern independence, there was only another reason to support the Union. Hence, practical politics, as well as sentimental inclination and a desire to air their theories of government, urged the Liberals to support the Union. As a result, the ablest writers, the most influential journals and the foremost politicians joined in discussions upon the American question.

From the election of Abraham Lincoln and the threats of disunion by the South, the newspapers showed a keen interest in the matter, although the disruption of the Union was not expected at first. The threats of the Southerners were looked upon as only what might be expected of a defeated party in America. France had become accustomed to hearing such things from America and did not take the latest crisis too seriously. Extraordinary prudence and moderation from both factions were necessary, but other elections had been reputed to be dangerous and nothing had come of them.¹⁷ The Southern States would be afraid to

¹⁶ *Retrospections of an Active Life*, vol. ii, p. 245, Bigelow to Seward, Dec. 9, 1864.

¹⁷ *Constitutionnel*, Nov. 21, 1860, H.-Marie Martin.

introduce the principle of secession. The states of the Union knew well that the first germ of dissolution introduced into the federation would be the source of thousands of evils more terrible than slavery itself, and perhaps only a little time would pass before the destruction of the whole of that enormous giant which had grown too quickly, and which ran the risk, if it were shaken too strongly, of perishing as much by its good qualities as by its faults. Both the North and the South understood this, and whether they believed in emancipation or in slavery, they were, above all, federalists.¹⁸

The threats were looked upon simply as political maneuvers. They were only "electoral threats," such as the politicians of the South, "accustomed to dominate by fear," had made many times before, and many of them would be embarrassed if taken at their word. While South Carolina seemed to be making an appearance of desiring to put the separatist program into execution, still that State was the "enfant terrible" of the Democratic party, and not too much importance was to be placed upon what it said. Five or six States might follow it, but that would be all, and such would not form a new confederation. Moreover, it would be unreasonable for states to declare their independence merely because the American people had chosen for the first time a president who did not satisfy the South, especially as most of the Republicans did not desire to suppress slavery but merely to prevent its extension.¹⁹

As time passed, however, and matters took on a more serious aspect, even the Liberal friends of the Union came to believe that the South would be successful to some degree. The early position of the *Journal des Débats* had been that the Democratic party, defeated in the elections, would not be so unreasonable as to provoke a conflict in which it would meet superior forces and be given over to the servile war that Frenchmen expected would result from a conflict. It was thought that the South needed the North, even the aboli-

¹⁸ Pays, Nov. 22, 1860, A. Esparbié.

¹⁹ Revue Contemporaine, vol. liii, p. 384, Nov. 29, 1860, E. Hervé.

tionists, to keep down slave uprisings. The *Débats* believed that the predictions of civil war came from those who desired to use the agitation in America as an argument against free institutions.²⁰ But only a month later that journal took the position that there would be a separation of some states though it hoped that these would be of small number.²¹ What astonished Europe was not so much to see a powerful state seized with an irresistible desire to cease to exist, so much as to see that work accomplished in an instant and almost without effort. The secession was regarded as a *fait accompli*.²² But in later articles, for a long time, the liberal paper continued to maintain hopes of the preservation of the Union, though the separation of a limited number of States was regarded as more probable. In an interesting article of February 14, 1861, the possibility was referred to that a party might rise up within the seceding States and reestablish the power of the federal government. It was pointed out also that there were elements of discord in the South, for Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and Kentucky did not need slavery, except to raise slaves for the cotton, rice and sugar-cane growing States, and Southern victory with the restoration of the African slave trade would remove even this incentive to retain the institution. In any case the North would never permit New Orleans and the region around it and the control of the Mississippi to pass away from it, for that river was absolutely necessary for the exportation of their products. The Western States would not permit the loss of this region. "If the whim struck them, the intrepid pioneers of the states of the Northwest . . . would conquer America, not merely to the mouths of the Mississippi, but down to Cape Horn." The new slave government would only extend from the Gulf of Mexico to a line south of the Chesapeake and from the Atlantic to a line east of the Mississippi. "What figure would it make in the world beside the immense agglomeration which would

²⁰ *Journal des Débats*, Dec. 7, 1860, John Lemoine.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Jan. 7, 1861, F. Camus.

²² *Ibid.*, Jan. 20, 1861, A. Léo.

remain grouped under the banner of the liberty of races?"²³ This article showed a surprisingly correct knowledge of the great forces at work in America, and a philosophical view of the situation of which only an outsider could be capable. The fall of Fort Sumter was not regarded as of great military significance, but its political consequences it was thought might be grave, for in diminishing the possibility of conciliation, it might render the rupture and separation irremediable.²⁴ It advised that the two sides get together and recognize that the North could not force the Southern States to reenter the Union. At any rate the character of the war would depend upon the action of the South, which might attempt to free the Potomac, or might limit itself to privateering.²⁵

On August 15, the probable results of the war were capitulated: 1, Dismemberment of the Union, with two new governments, the South being limited to seven or eight States east of the Mississippi; 2, Abolition by the North, or at least further restriction of slavery; 3, The North would become a great naval power as a result of the war; 4, Eventually institutions in North America would become more centralized and the executive become more powerful; 5, Eventually, the South would start upon a career of conquest against Cuba and Mexico, while the North would receive more sympathy from Canada in its desire to annex that country; 6, It was considered certain that Europe would lose America as a market for its goods during the war; 7, Europe would lose its cotton supply during the war.²⁶ Near the end of September, 1861, the hope was expressed that the North would submit to the separation as an "inexorable fatality," for war would mean the loss of liberties to the people, restriction of travel by passports, preventative arrests, restrictions upon the press, seizure of goods presumed to belong to

²³ Ibid., Feb. 14, 1861, F. Camus. See also Laboulaye, "Pourquoi le Nord ne peut accepter la séparation," *Revue Nationale*, Dec., 1862.

²⁴ Ibid., April 27, 1861, L. Alloury.

²⁵ Ibid., June 3, 1861, Baudrillart.

²⁶ Ibid., Aug. 15, 1861, F. Camus.

Southerners, and in addition, the raising of the imposts, and direct taxes. The people probably would not endure these illegal and unconstitutional things, and Congress would have to pass laws of violence and terror. If the people should submit to such laws, they would be under a rule of force, and some audacious general, possessing popularity, might establish a new order of things "upon the ruins of that which the great men of the independence had instituted with so much care and sagacity." And to this might be added the horrors of a servile war. But, though America seemed condemned to go through cruel experiences, the belief was expressed that it would come out stronger than ever before as did France from the horrors of 1793.²⁷ Liberals resigned themselves to what they believed inevitable. The *Revue des Deux Mondes* feared that the last acts of Buchanan's administration had rendered the dissolution of the confederation irrevocable,²⁸ but it hoped that by avoiding the shedding of blood and by merely blockading and surrounding the South, the North could bring about a reaction within the new confederation and the parts of the Republic would be reunited, for the shedding of blood would mean the end of the Union, as it could not be imagined that the North could conquer and govern the Southern States.²⁹ If the South were conquered it would be only an Ireland, a Hungary, a Poland.³⁰ A long war would mean a large permanent army, with great budgets and debts. The American Republic would no longer be what Europe had known; transformations would take place to the loss of liberty. To prevent this, the war must be short.³¹ The *Revue Germanique* believed that the North would be victorious in the end; that the planters

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Sept. 28, 1861, F. Camus.

²⁸ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xxxii, p. 758, Apr. 1, 1861, E. Forcade. For the opinions of this brilliant editor, see L. M. Sears, "A Neglected Critic of our Civil War," in *Miss. Valley Hist. Rev.*, vol. i, p. 532, March, 1915.

²⁹ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xxxiii, pp. 1001-2, June 15, 1861, E. Forcade.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. xxxv, pp. 243-4, Sept. 1, 1861, E. Forcade.

³¹ *Ibid.*, vol. xxxv, pp. 512-14, Sept. 15, 1861, E. Forcade.

did not represent the whole South, and that even though they might dominate by terror, there were many there who did not own slaves, who might be expected to sympathize with the Union. With slavery abolished new elements and new interests would come forward and the new generations would rebuild amid peace and liberty that which war had destroyed.³² When the Liberals could take such a gloomy view of the situation, the Imperialists could not be expected to entertain the idea of the preservation of the republic of the new world. As early as January 20, 1861, the *Constitutionnel* took a serious view of affairs. "It is, indeed, unfortunately probable, after the turn that events are taking, that we shall see consummated the scission of the great American republic." For even if the separatist States were defeated in their first resistance, there would remain a moral rupture that could not be healed. The only hope of preservation of the Union, it thought, lay in the possibility that the North, though victorious both at the polls and in the field, would accept the rôle of the defeated.³³ The idea was derided that it was possible to subjugate ten or twelve million men spread over an immense territory.³⁴ The Pays believed that an agglomeration of states opposed in interests, different in origin, with individual tendencies, badly united by the federal political bond, such as the United States, was destined sooner or later to disintegrate,³⁵ and the *Patrie* thought it probable that there would be republics of the North, Center, South, West and Pacific.³⁶ At the end of the year 1861, the papers of France, no matter where their sympathies lay, had given up the idea that the Union would be preserved in its entirety. The greatest hope of the friends of the Union was that the new confederation would be limited to a few states, and they feared that if their ideal state were subjected to the

³² *Revue Germanique*, vol. xvi, p. 480, Aug. 15, 1861, Charles Dollfus.

³³ *Constitutionnel*, Jan. 20, 1861, H.-Marie Martin.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, July 7, 1861, A. Grandguillot.

³⁵ *Pays*, May 29, 1861, Durangel.

³⁶ *Patrie*, Mar. 25, 1861, Oscar de Watteville.

trials of a long civil war, it would come out of the conflict transformed, to the loss of liberty for the whole world.

Throughout the war an editorial battle was waged between the papers in France as to what were the real causes of the conflict. The supporters of the Union knew that if they could pin the issue down to slavery and prove that slavery was the thing at stake, the sympathies of the French people would be with the North. French newspapers supporting the South could make only the most timid efforts to extenuate the institution of slavery, and they bent their energies toward proving that slavery was not the issue.

The position taken by the *Journal des Débats* from the very beginning of the conflict is representative of the Liberal argument throughout the war. Upon receipt of the news of the election of Lincoln to the presidency, that paper asserted that the victory of the Republican party was the result of Northern indignation against Southern encroachments. The disregard of the slavery party for its most solemn agreements, such as the Missouri Compromise, the declaration that slavery was established by divine right, that even the people of a state could not pronounce slavery illegal, and Southern threats of resistance to the Union, it said, were outrages to humanity and to reason, and had produced their fruit. The election of Lincoln had put an end to the encroachments of the slavery party. Even though it declared that it would not interfere in the peculiar affairs of the South, the basis of the Republican party was abolition. The slave territory would be enclosed in a circle of free states where escaped negroes would find an assured asylum, and if then they should attempt to separate from the Union, they would find themselves without allies, for, asked the *Débats*, what nation would not repulse with disgust the hand offered to it by the new American republic?³⁷ In a satirical analysis of Buchanan's annual message, it maintained that the South was threatening to dissolve the Union because the North had exercised its constitutional rights in choosing a president.

³⁷ *Journal des Débats*, Dec. 4, 1860, Auguste Léo.

"The South insisted that the Constitution admit slavery in principle, it claimed the right of spreading slavery abroad, it accepted, then repudiated, the Missouri Compromise, and now it desires to forbid other states to declare that liberty is a common right on their soil." By separation, with a departure from the northern protective policy, the South hopes to develop southern ports to supplant those of the North. As for Buchanan's proposition for the return of fugitive slaves, "Let one imagine for an instant what would happen in our streets and our public squares if we should see a negro seized by the police, bound in chains, placed in prison, then led out like a beast of burden to be turned over to a master who reclaimed him." It is just such scenes as this, says the *Débats*, that have led to a revulsion of feeling in the North against Southern domination. If a conflict now results which leads to the fall of the Union, it will not be because of any fault inherent in its constitution, but because of the impossibility of leaving side by side in the same state, liberty and the most degrading servitude.³⁸ This evidently was intended as a reply to those who held that the dissensions in America only showed the failure of republican institutions. Commenting upon the South Carolina declaration of independence and the statement that the yoke of the North has been broken, the *Débats* exclaims, "as if not to be longer assured of always oppressing was for them an intolerable oppression."³⁹

With the French liberal, the issue of slavery blinded him to the broader movement for nationality in the South. However, some appreciation of other issues was shown in an article of February 20, 1860, when it was admitted that slavery was not the only thing that threatened the Union, for there was also the desire, maintained for ten or twelve years in the South, to win commercial freedom from the North, especially from New York. A means to this end was a proposed canal by way of the James and Kenawah Rivers to

³⁸ Ibid, Dec. 30, 1860, Auguste Léo.

³⁹ Ibid., Jan. 10, 1861, J.-J. Weiss.

connect the Mississippi Valley and the Atlantic. Another means was direct commerce with the cotton consuming countries. But the *Débats* believed that this latter would be a doubtful scheme, as commercial routes and habits change slowly, and New York and Boston probably would remain for a long time the great emporia of the world commerce of the United States. It maintained that a more practicable proposal was to build up Southern cotton manufacturies; for, it said, even then of the 2,600,000 spindles in the United States, 350,000 were in the South.⁴⁰

The slavery argument was, however, soon resumed, and it was reasserted that: "The cause of the war is the determination that the South took three quarters of a century ago, and in which it has imperturbably persisted, of perpetuating and extending slavery in place of having applied its care to limiting and diminishing it by degrees."⁴¹ As for the contention that the tariff was an important issue in the conflict, that was brushed aside with the declaration that "the South . . . perverted the truth when it strove . . . to persuade Europe that men united by bonds of nationality and parentage were going to butcher one another over an affair of the tariff."⁴² The annual message of Jefferson Davis was read carefully in France, but liberals could not see a moral issue from the Southern point of view, and commenting upon a clause in which he placed his faith in the greatness and justice of his cause, the *Débats* says: "Those certainly are fine and magnificent words. But, in the mouth of Mr. Davis, applied to the cause that he represents and which he defends, they are not only a monstrous misstatement, a scandal, they are a blasphemy."⁴³ The Davis message had not gone into the question of slavery, and this is explained by the assertion that slavery "is the arch saint which no one may touch, it is the legitimate and necessary base of well constituted states. It is no longer slavery,

⁴⁰ Ibid., Feb. 20, 1861, Chemin-Dupontès.

⁴¹ Ibid., May 17, 1861, Baudrillart.

⁴² Ibid., Oct. 19, 1861, Auguste Léo.

⁴³ Ibid., Dec. 10, 1861, Louis Alloury.

humble and modest, such as showed itself when Washington admitted it into his republic, it is slavery carrying its head high, flying its flag, resting upon its rights and claiming proudly its place in the sun, threatening us, if we refuse it, to turn our workmen into the street.”⁴⁴

The French, especially those who supported the North, had little to say about the constitutional question in America. Accustomed to a unitary state, with no question about the location of sovereignty, they had little comprehension of the subtle constitutional arguments to which the United States had become accustomed. The illegality of secession was taken almost for granted by the liberal journals. It was admitted that the separation of a State of the United States was not of the serious character that the rebellion of a mere province would be, for historically and constitutionally the States of the United States had had characteristics of separate countries. However, the Constitution created a new being and did “not foresee and could not be expected to foresee such a separation. It has not at all regulated as to the manner according to which an act so grave could be accomplished.”⁴⁵ The truth of the doctrine of Lincoln, it said, “that a federation can not be broken legally without the consent of all the federated states” was obvious.⁴⁶ The arguments of Mr. Lincoln were, however, found to be too subtle “and more worthy perhaps of a jurist than of a statesman”; but it was agreed that “he had no difficulty in proving that a constitution can not consecrate the legality of acts which tend to annihilate it.” It was presumed that these arguments were intended for political effect at home, but Europe could not be expected to be concerned with them. The thing that did appeal to Europe, said the *Débats*, from one end to the other, was the feeling of the North which the South denounced as intolerable fanaticism—the horror of slavery.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ibid., Dec. 14, 1861, Auguste Léo.

⁴⁵ Ibid., June 24, 1861, F. Camus.

⁴⁶ Ibid., July 20, 1861, J.-J. Weiss.

⁴⁷ Ibid., July 31, 1861, Auguste Léo.

These opinions of the *Débats* were the Liberal argument upon the issues of the war, expressed in perhaps its best and most emphatic form. But the other Liberal organs were not less positive in the belief that the essential thing was slavery. The *Revue des Deux Mondes* was the leading literary periodical of France and was intended for the cultured classes. Near the close of the year 1861 it contained an article which summed up this side of the liberal argument. The South did not fight either for a separate political organization, or because it possessed a separate nationality, or to secure economic freedom. An evil tariff could cause only temporary inconvenience, while secession and civil war would do irreparable injury. The Republicans still were in a minority in the Senate and if the secessionists had not withdrawn they could have prevented the enactment of new laws they did not want. The real cause of the rupture was slavery. "The war is from now on a war against slavery, not in form but in essence, not in words, but in action. . . . If foreign war should complicate the civil war, immediate emancipation will be proclaimed as a measure of public safety."⁴⁸ Charivari felt that the war would solve the question of slavery and that John Brown would not have died in vain.⁴⁹

While the Liberals from the beginning gave their sympathies to the Union and maintained consistently throughout the war that slavery was the real issue, the Imperialists were much less unanimous and consistent. At first they were friendly enough toward the Union, but as the war progressed they openly sided with the Confederacy. An example of this was the *Constitutionnel*, controlled by the Count Persigny, a member of Napoleon's cabinet, who had followed that individual's fortunes through all their vicissitudes. It was commonly regarded as having a semi-official character. After the American election of 1860, that journal expressed its pleasure in seeing public opinion thus pro-

⁴⁸ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xxxvi, pp. 152-57, 162, Nov. 1, 1861, Auguste Laugel.

⁴⁹ *Charivari*, May 5, 1861, Clément Caraguel.

nounce itself against slavery, but it hoped that Lincoln would not prove to be the tool of his party instead of its leader, and be led into extremes by the radical element.⁵⁰ Like the *Débats*, it gave a sarcastic review to Buchanan's annual message, and summed it up as saying, "Do all that the South requests, then it will be satisfied and will not separate from you." Referring to the repudiation by the South of the Missouri Compromise, it asked whether the South was not the aggressor.⁵¹ On January 10, summing up the situation, it said that, "After having followed constantly a policy of encroachment, it [the South] declares itself menaced before being attacked, and separates from the Union which has not committed toward it any other crime than to elect constitutionally a president representing the sentiments of an immense majority. For, it is important to state again that the election of Lincoln did not mean the abolition of slavery, but simply a firm resolution to prevent its indefinite extension." It is true that the tariff and a desire for industrial independence from the North have been influences in the South. However, "It is to safeguard that dear 'peculiar institution,' it is in the name of its security in the midst of its slaves, that the South proclaims itself in rebellion against the federal constitution."⁵² It was even suggested that if the North had divined the serious character of the matter and foreseen the coming execution, it would have subordinated its scruples in regard to slavery, voluntarily, as before, to its grave interests in the maintenance of the Union.⁵³ As for the question of legality, this paper found that from a strict interpretation of the Constitution, the South certainly was correct in insisting upon the repeal of laws restricting the return of fugitive slaves. From this point of view, therefore, the North was the section that was revolutionary, but revolutionary in the best sense, for it was carrying out the revolutionary principle of the founders of the republic,

⁵⁰ *Constitutionnel*, Nov. 21, 1860, H.-Marie Martin.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Dec. 26, 1860, H.-Marie Martin.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Jan. 10, 1861, H.-Marie Martin.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Jan. 20, 1861, H.-Marie Martin.

while "the South has turned its back upon the Revolution and deceived the hopes of 1776." It was admitted that if the doctrine of States' Rights were accepted, the South had the right of rebellion. But when the Southerners demand the right to carry slaves with them through free territory or into new territories, they are demanding too much, for it is not just that the 350,000 proprietors of four million negroes should raise the claim to "dominate in a republic of thirty-two million men, as they have done in reality for such a long time, and to impose upon them forever their law and the shame of their 'peculiar institution.'"⁵⁴

Up to this time, it is evident that the Constitutionnel had been favorable to the cause of the Union. An article of May 7, however, paved the way for an easy transition to the other side. It began to appear that its former elaborate arguments were useless, for the war that is now probable, it said, is a "war without meaning, for one knows too well that the extermination of slavery is not the immediate end of the armies of the North," and "the negroes have not many friends among those who will defend Washington."⁵⁵ On May 16, the transition was completed, and the Constitutionnel enlisted in the cause of the South. "In fact, war for war and nothing else than war, is the strange enterprise of which the North dreams." "It is only too true that the movement which now draws from their firesides all the able-bodied men from Canada to the Mason-Dixon's line to throw them upon the South, has no *raison d'être*. No principle justifies it; one searches vainly for an explanation in it." Emancipation "evidently would be a reason for us, but, without examining whether that would be a right, it is sufficient to question the men of the North or the papers which represent their opinions, to oppose the most formal negation to the existence of that motive in the Yankee heads. It is truly puerile to discuss that point." It is doubted even

⁵⁴ Ibid., Jan. 24, 1861, H.-Marie Martin.

⁵⁵ Ibid., May 7, 1861, Edouard Gaulhiac.

that emancipation can be a result of the war. Continuing, the Constitutionnel says:

Did the North desire or did it not, that emancipation *a priori*? Indeed the frank abolitionists of New England would not hesitate to recognize that truth, that their numbers are restricted and certainly do not constitute the majority of those who recognize Mr. Lincoln as president. . . . If it is not liberty of the negroes, is it liberty of the inhabitants of the North which is at stake, in any of its forms, civil liberty, commercial liberty, political liberty? Not at all. A separation of states has taken place. What difference does it make whether it be based upon a true or false interpretation of the federal compact. . . . It is proper for us to be silent, not having participated intimately in its signature.

The thing that is incontestable, the thing that we have the right to say, as witnesses, is that at the time of our last interview, tête à tête, with the Union, upon the reciprocal presentation of Lafayette and Franklin, the American faith had for its credo: governments depend only upon the consent of the governed.

By what right, today, does the North desire to impose its government upon the South which does not desire it? ⁵⁶

Finally, on November 19, appears an article which evidently is intended to sum up the situation. It is pointed out that the people of the North and of the South are different in political and social ideas, and have followed different lines of industrial development. Moreover, the founders of the republic left germs of discord in the first place in permitting slavery, for which the eight States having only a small number of slaves and therefore a small interest at stake, are the most to blame; and in the second place a mistake was made in trying to form a nation out of states which intended to retain their sovereignty. As for the secession, the people of the North knew that the election of Lincoln was considered by the South a danger justifying withdrawal from the Union, but they persisted in electing him and did nothing to allay the fears of the South, rejecting all compromise. As a matter of fact, the Constitutionnel seems to believe that too much democracy has been the cause of it all. Finally, it is summed up: The citizens of the United States will end by seeing that it is folly "to want to join forcibly things between which conscience and the human language have placed an abyss,—slavery and liberty, the in-

⁵⁶ Ibid., May 16, 1861, Edouard Gaulhiac.

dependence of states and their conquest by force of arms."⁵⁷ Thus, to borrow an expression from the *Débats*, the Constitutionnel veers from North to South.⁵⁸

The *Pays*, also regarded as semi-official, had very early offered to extenuate slavery and had opened its columns to pro-Southern articles, as shown above. This paper made a great deal of the legal argument. The United States was only a confederation, from which the States had a perfect right to withdraw. The *Pays* engaged in a controversy with the *Opinion Nationale* on the status of the secessionists. "The *Opinion Nationale* calls the Southern states rebels because they refuse to sanction the usurpation of powers which have never been delegated to the federal government."⁵⁹ Du Bellet in this paper attempted to prove that the North was the real supporter of slavery while the South was opposed to the institution. He said that in 1826 and 1827, the Northern majority had defeated two measures for buying freedom for the slaves, and that Virginia, Maryland and Kentucky had been preparing for gradual emancipation, but the abolitionists by opposing the execution of the fugitive slave laws and by presenting the Wilmot Proviso, "which denied to the inhabitants of the South entrance into the territories" prevented this.⁶⁰ In fact, slavery would already have been abolished in the South had it not been for the fact that most of the European immigrants had gone to the Northern States, thus increasing the political power of the North and threatening little by little the loss to the South of its legitimate share of political power, particularly in reference to the tariff.⁶¹

Despite their protests to the contrary, the Imperialists were not at all averse to seeing the passing away of the dem-

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Nov. 19, 1861, F. Gaillardet.

⁵⁸ The *Patrie* went through a similar and almost contemporaneous transition. Compare Jan. 30, 1861, Cucheval-Clarigny, with May 15, 1861, Camille de la Bouliè.

⁵⁹ *Pays*, Apr. 29, 1861, Paul Pecquet du Bellet; May 14, 1861, C. Girard.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, May 15, 1861, Paul Pecquet du Bellet.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, July 27, 1861, Louis Couture.

ocratic republic across the sea, and in fact were willing to assist at the demise. Liberals could only sorrowfully take their stand with the cause of the North, "the cause of human liberty and emancipation against the cynical and violent party of slavery," finding consolation in the great and influential book of the Count Agénor de Gasparin, "The Uprising of a Great People," which foretold that over the crime of slavery there would arise from this war a greater and grander people.⁶² But they could not help but fear that war would alter the character of the Union. "What grieves and humiliates us in the unfortunate civil war in which the United States founder, is the possible miscarriage of that plan of a society constructed by human reason."⁶³

The Constitutionnel found the American troubles a subject for moralizing against self-government. America, it says, which has been pointed out as the ideal of government, which the old nations of Europe would do well to imitate, now finds that its first crisis leads to a reign of terror, with hostility to the rich, the well born and the intellectual, liberty suspended, justice annulled, the law of suspects in effect, the press censured by a wild demagoguery, which searches for traitors in order to justify itself with its defeats, its mistakes and its fears. Such is the failure of self-government. On the other hand the democracy of France each day grows in strength, for it recognizes the distinctions of class, intellectual eminence, and social superiority. Thus, Frenchmen are invited to waste no tears upon the downfall of American democracy.⁶⁴ The Pays predicted that if the South were conquered by the North there would be a dictatorship by the North. "That is what war would make of that government that has been represented as a model of perfection worthy of serving as an example for the aspirations of all the peoples of the world."⁶⁵

⁶² *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xxxiii, pp. 240-1, May 1, 1861, E. Forcade.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiv, pp. 1003-4, Aug. 15, 1861, E. Forcade.

⁶⁴ *Constitutionnel*, Sept. 26, 1861, A. Grenier.

⁶⁵ *Pays*, Jan. 31, 1861, Camille de la Bouliè.

Frenchmen naturally were interested in the war from the point of view of practical considerations for France. The *Débats* saw in a united and powerful United States a natural ally for France, a necessary support upon the seas, a country so constituted as to be dangerous to no one.⁶⁶ Victory of the North would bring an end to those filibustering expeditions which had been directed from the United States against nations to the south.⁶⁷ The war tariff, however, could not find favor even in the eyes of its best friends in France, and on May 1, 1861, the *Débats* complained that "hardly had the first threatening symptoms broken out, than from one end of the republic to the other there was raised the cry 'To the tariffs!' Immediately abolitionists and the supporters of slavery, republicans and democrats, ran to the arsenal of customs duties, and began conscientiously to bombard with master strokes of taxes on imports and exports, ad valorem duties and specific duties; each raising, lowering, modifying, according to his great advantage and the greatest detriment of his neighbors."⁶⁸

The *Revue des Deux Mondes* felt that France had "a great interest in the maintenance of a power for the foundation of which it had labored so generously, and which could contribute to the maintenance of the maritime equilibrium."⁶⁹

The *Constitutionnel* upheld a policy of holy egoism. "The sword of Charlemagne and Napoleon leaves the scabbard only when the interest and the glory of the French people are at stake."⁷⁰ As for Southern expeditions against Central American states, it held that that danger had been greatly exaggerated, and the insignificance of the expeditions of the past was proof of the small interest maintained there in such conquests.⁷¹ In answer to the assertions of those who held

⁶⁶ *Journal des Débats*, Oct. 25, 1861, F. Camus, "pour extrait," from a letter.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Dec. 4, 1860, Auguste Léo.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, May 1, 1861, Auguste Léo.

⁶⁹ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xxxi, pp. 752-4, Feb. 1, 1861, E. Forcade, and vol. xxxiii, pp. 1001-2, June 15, 1861, E. Forcade.

⁷⁰ *Constitutionnel*, Dec. 15, 1861, Auguste V.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Feb. 24, 1861, Paul Merruau.

that France should have a natural sympathy in upholding the integrity of a country established by its aid, the Imperialist organ answered that Washington and Lafayette established the independence of both the North and the South, and France had no right to choose between the two. And as for any gratitude the United States might entertain toward France for its aid, the Constitutionnel maintained that it did not exist, for "if one should place on one side of the balances the proofs of affection and of gratitude of the United States and upon the other the marks of their spirit of hostility, distrust, jealousy, opposition, ingratitude, the pan loaded with their ingratitude would be, without doubt, heavier and more completely filled than the one which carried the pledges of their thankfulness."⁷² The Pays hoped that if a reconciliation were brought about between the two sections that one of the clauses of the transaction would be the abolition of the tariff, while if the Union were not established, the Southern program of free exchanges would open to French agriculture and industry a way for fruitful relations with liberal compensation.⁷³ The North is the industrial rival of France. Up to the present it has made itself the intermediary between the manufactured products of Europe and the consumption of the South, and receives annually for those services, two hundred and fifty million francs which could be directed in large part to Paris, "if France knew how to profit by the favorable occasion which was offered her of monopolizing the commerce of direct exchange between her and the new Confederation." If Europe refused to make commercial treaties with the South which would permit the payment for its tobacco and cotton in manufactured products, European finances and industry would be sensibly affected, for it would be necessary to export in specie the nine hundred millions which constituted the price of its commodities and to this should be added the sums necessary to pay for the importations of wheat which the periodical crop

⁷² Ibid., Dec. 10, 1861, A. Grenier.

⁷³ Pays, Feb. 28, 1862, A. de Lauzières.

failures made necessary. Du Bellet followed this appeal to the pocketbook by advising the recognition of the Southern Confederation, which "reposing upon a force legally and morally exercised by the unanimity of its inhabitants, is a government *de facto* regularly constituted."⁷⁴

The *Patrie* argued that, the right of secession being admitted, it was in the interest of Europe to "favor or at least not to hinder, a revolution which caused to disappear from European politics a great state whose rôle could have become embarrassing at any time," and simplified, by separation, the commercial relations of the Occident with the different states of North America.⁷⁵

In September, 1861, the rumor went the rounds that Garibaldi had been offered the command of the Union armies. Bigelow says that this report "was bread to the imperialistic journals in Paris." Later it was heard that Garibaldi had refused the offer or had been dissuaded by his friends.⁷⁶ Bigelow gives a somewhat different version of the incident, based upon the testimony of his friend, Mr. Beckwith. It seems that the United States consul at Antwerp had written to Garibaldi expressing a wish that he would throw himself into the struggle, and Garibaldi answered that he would be glad to do so, if Italy would spare him. Then, Henry S. Sanford, Minister Resident at Brussels, took the matter up and wrote to Garibaldi asking if he would entertain a proposition to enter the service of the United States. The Italian hero then wrote to the King, saying, in substance, "The Americans desire me to take command of their armies; does your Majesty need me here, or shall I go?" The King gave his permission, and Sanford went to Italy, taking Beckwith along, and offered a major-generalship, which was all he had authority to offer. Garibaldi rejected it. He said he would take only the supreme

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, May 7, 1861, Paul Pecquet du Bellet.

⁷⁵ *Patrie*, July 26, 1861, A. Esparbié.

⁷⁶ *Journal des Débats*, Sept. 19, 1861, Louis Alloury; *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xxxv, pp. 755-757, Oct. 1, 1861, E. Forcade; *Charivari*, Sept. 16, 1861, Henri Rochefort.

command with authority to proclaim the freedom of all the blacks in the United States.⁷⁷

Perhaps the French turned their thoughts to Garibaldi because they did not believe that in America any great man had risen to the occasion. Lincoln was not recognized as much above the common level. Upon his election, the *Constitutionnel*, then friendly to the Union, while admitting that he had the reputation of being an upright man, a lawyer of talent and a remarkable orator, recognized that he had not yet been in a position to show himself a statesman, or to prove that he possessed the qualities to govern with foresight and firmness.⁷⁸ Lincoln was classed with Buchanan. "The American Union would need, in such a peril, a superior man, whose respected voice, dominating the tumult, would address to patriotism a solemn appeal, and would rally the spirits under the old federal banner, held high and firm. In default of a Washington, it is Mr. Buchanan, then Mr. Lincoln, upon whom the heavy task has fallen of saving the republic."⁷⁹ Soon after his inauguration, however, it was predicted in a letter from Washington that Lincoln would not be able to leave the presidential office, "without being recognized as great as Washington or as incapable as Romulus Augustulus."⁸⁰ The *Pays* thought that the new president revealed a character of weakness in complete discord with the gravity of the circumstances. His Indianapolis speech was summed up as saying, First, that there was no right of secession, Second, that he would not undertake to force the separated States to re-enter the Union, and Third, that he would retake the Federal forts and buildings of which the South had taken possession. These "hesitating and timid declarations" had not been improved upon at Cincinnati, Columbus, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and New York, where "everything reveals vagueness of ideas, hesitation,

⁷⁷ *Retrospections of an Active Life*, vol. 1, pp. 371-372.

⁷⁸ *Constitutionnel*, Nov. 21, 1860, H.-Marie Martin.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Dec. 26, 1860, H.-Marie Martin. See also Charivari, Mar. 29, 1861, Pierre Véron.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Mar. 11, 1861, Edward Amun.

mistrust of himself.”⁸¹ Even the *Débats*, with all its faith in democracy, had to admit that no one had risen to the crisis: “Who will dare to make the fanatics of the South hear the voice of truth and justice and defend their interests against their passions. Where, in America, is the statesman, independent enough, so superior to circumstances as to seek without mental reservation, in that perilous crisis, only the well-being of his country? Alas, it is too probable that America will not find even an Agrippa.”⁸² And on February 14: “Where is the superior spirit who will discover the proper combination to satisfy everyone? Where is the influential man before whom small jealousies and small interests would give away with respect? Alas! in America truly superior statesmen have disappeared, and the eye searches there in vain for one of those great influences before which the vulgar are silent.”⁸³

In March, 1861, the Confederate Secretary of State sent a commission of three men, W. L. Yancey, Judge P. A. Rost, and A. Dudley Mann, to represent the Confederate States in Europe. In May, they wrote from Paris that they were convinced that England and France would act together in their relations with the Confederacy, and that for the present those countries would observe a strict neutrality. Meantime, there was nothing for the commissioners to do but to influence public opinion in as unobtrusive a manner as possible, awaiting some favorable event that would enable them to press the matter of recognition.⁸⁴ Soon after this, while the other two commissioners remained in London, Rost was sent to Paris, where he had a most favorable interview with the Count de Morny, “the confidential friend of the Emperor.” Perhaps association in official circles made the commissioners more optimistic than the facts warranted,

⁸¹ Pays, Mar. 26, 1861, Camille de la Bouliè.

⁸² *Journal des Débats*, Jan. 20, 1861, A. Léo.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, Feb. 14, 1861, F. Camus.

⁸⁴ Yancey and Rost to Toombs, May 10, 1861 (Pickett Papers; Confederate Diplomatic Correspondence; MS. archives now in the Library of Congress).

for they reported that the "opinions of the French people and of the Government, as far as could be learned, are considered to be quite favorable to our cause. The public journals are generally favorable. The Anti-Slavery sentiment is weak, and not active, in Paris. The Imperialists are considered as not averse to see a division of the late United States, while large numbers of the Red Republicans and Orleanists view it in an unfavorable light as destroying a naval power, which they had looked to as a counterpoise to that of Great Britain."⁸⁵ They continued their efforts to influence opinion, and seemed to think they had considerable success,⁸⁶ although their evident belief that the *Opinion Nationale*, organ of the Prince Napoleon, was becoming favorable to the Confederate cause,⁸⁷ was contradicted by the subsequent attitude of that journal. It was recognized that the worst enemies of the Confederacy were the Orleanists and the Red Republicans.⁸⁸

The Federals were no less diligent in keeping in touch with public opinion. In March, Faulkner wrote to Black that the Emperor would be acting "in opposition to the well understood feelings of the French people, if he should precipitately adopt any step whatever tending to give force and efficacy to those movements of separation, so long as a reasonable hope remains that the federal authority can or should be maintained over the seceding states."⁸⁹

An interesting incident, as showing the attitude taken by this government in regard to semi-official utterances, occurred in June. The *Patrie*, which had been regarded as semi-official, published an article reporting that negotiations were under way looking toward the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy, and concluded: "France in her new attitude, would not purpose to interfere at all with the internal or external

⁸⁵ Yancey and Mann to Toombs, No. 1, May 21, 1861; Yancey, Rost and Mann to Toombs, June 1, 1861 (Pickett Papers).

⁸⁶ Yancey and Mann to Toombs, No. 4, Aug. 1, 1861 (Pickett Papers).

⁸⁷ Mann to Davis, "private," Aug. 24, 1861 (Pickett Papers).

⁸⁸ Yancey and Rost to Hunter, No. 8, Oct. 5, 1861 (Pickett Papers).

⁸⁹ Faulkner to Black, No. 111, Mar. 19, 1861.

affairs of the Italian kingdom, which must be sole judge of its administration, as it is of its future and its destinies. It will act towards it as at some future day the great European powers will act upon the American question, by recognizing the new republic of the southern States when that republic shall have established a government resting on foundations which will permit the formation of international relations with it conducive to general interests.”⁹⁰ This article was republished in the *Moniteur* without other remark than to say that it was taken from the *Patrie*, but the *Moniteur* was of so purely an official character that the mere reproduction of such an article was regarded as of great significance. Dayton said it attracted much attention and caused some anxiety. At the first opportunity he brought the matter to the attention of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Minister “at once said that his own attention had been arrested by it; that it was a ‘silliness’; that Mr. Persigny (minister of the interior) was more dissatisfied with it even than he was; that the *Patrie* had ceased, ten days ago, to be a semi-official paper; that he did not know how the paragraph had crept into the *Moniteur*, but that Count Walewski (minister of state) had been out of the city for ten days past, and that as a consequence matters had not had the usual oversight. He read me a note from the count, in answer to one he (Mr. Thouvenel) had written, inquiring if it would not be better to insert something to show that the paragraph was printed in the *Moniteur* by mistake, to which note the count replied that he thought it would be giving an unnecessary importance to the matter, and in that view Mr. Thouvenel upon reflection, concurred.”⁹¹ Mr. Seward replied to Dayton’s report of the matter: “We are pleased that you called Mr. Thouvenel’s attention to the mischievous paragraph in the *Moniteur*, because it has drawn out renewed and most satisfactory assurances of the friendly

⁹⁰ *Patrie*, June 15, 1861, Louis Bellet. Translation taken from American Diplomatic Correspondence, accompanying Dayton’s note to Seward, No. 11, June -, 1861.

⁹¹ Dayton to Seward, No. 11, June -, 1861.

feelings and good wishes of the government of France. At the same time, it is but just to ourselves that you shall now inform Mr. Thouvenel that it is our settled habit never to overhear what the press, or the ministers, or even the monarch of a foreign country with which we are in amity, says concerning us, and never to ask any explanations so long as such observations are not directly communicated by the government itself to us, and it, at the same time, discharges all its customary functions without hostility or injury to us." Belief in the friendship and in the good will of France was such a settled habit of mind on the part of the American people that if "anything is hastily written or spoken on either side that would seem to indicate a different sentiment, it is wise to let it pass without sensibility, and certainly without querulous animadversion."⁹² After this, although the semi-official press devoted themselves to the support of the Confederacy, they were free to publish obnoxious articles about the United States without complaint from the American minister.

It was while public opinion was in this formative stage, and parties were taking their positions upon the American question rather because of tendencies and general principles, that an event occurred that brought about a crystallization of opinion, and which for a while seemed likely to draw two great powers of Europe into the conflict.

⁹² Seward to Dayton, No. 26, July 6, 1861.

CHAPTER II

THE TRENT AFFAIR

On November 8, 1861, the British mail steamer Trent was stopped in the open sea by the United States man-of-war San Jacinto, and from it were removed the two Confederate commissioners, James M. Mason, of Virginia, who had been accredited to England, and John Slidell, of Louisiana, accredited to France, together with the commissioners' secretaries. This act, if approved by the government at Washington, would have amounted to a complete reversal of the historic policy of the United States, but it was received with the wildest enthusiasm throughout the North, not so much because of a fear of what the commissioners might have accomplished in Europe, as because it was recognized as a flout at England which was thought to be too friendly to the Confederacy. Indignation in England ran correspondingly high. The case was referred to the legal advisers of the Crown, who pronounced the act of Captain Wilkes illegal. The cabinet made immediate preparations for war, and an ultimatum was sent to the United States, giving the American government seven days to reply. Lord Lyons formally read the note to Seward on December 23. The British position was sustained in a note of Thouvenel, minister of foreign affairs, dated December 3, which was read by the French minister at Washington to Seward. It was Napoleon's policy to maintain the understanding with Great Britain, and the comments of the "official" papers show that he was willing to go to extreme lengths in this matter of the Trent.

The act of Captain Wilkes took France by surprise. No one had suspected that the United States at such a time would beard England on the seas. It was recognized immediately as a matter of extreme gravity. It was thought at

first that the officer must have acted upon his own responsibility, or if he did obey instructions from the cabinet at Washington, that the latter had not sufficiently weighed the consequences. "That would be the consecration of the right of visit, against which they have always protested and which was one of the principal causes of the war made by them against that same England, in 1812." It was hoped that the United States would repair the mistake.¹ Even the *Constitutionnel* did not predict a war. That paper stated that it has no sympathy with the *Morning Post* when it threatened the United States with cannon; that the mere demand of a great nation should suffice in a question of international law and justice.² The *Patrie* was more aggressive. In its opinion, the law officers of the Crown were clearly correct in their decision, and it appeared that it would be difficult for the great maritime nations to remain indifferent upon a question which touched their rights and interests.³ In a cold-blooded analysis of the dispute, the *Constitutionnel* said that the United States might: 1, Surrender Mason and Slidell with the provision that England renounce the right of visit; 2, Say it preferred a direct war to what it considered indirect war on the part of England when it supported the South secretly, arm its slaves and go to war, though this did not accord with the past policy of the United States; or 3, It might turn its arms against Canada. In any case, if England desired war, this was a good time to secure it, for now it could procure cotton and destroy a marine which gave it umbrage, while having the air of only defending its honor. But, whatever the solution might be, France had nothing to lose. If the matter were settled by the "abolition of the right of visit and the absolute recognition of the principle that the flag covers the goods," it would be a benefit for liberty of commerce and the seas. War between England and the United States was regarded with considerable complacency. "War would close momentarily, it is

¹ *Constitutionnel*, Nov. 29, 1861, F. Gaillardet.

² *Ibid.*, Nov. 30, 1861, Paulin Limayrac.

³ *Patrie*, Dec. 1, 1861, A. Esparbié.

true, the markets of the North, already so restrained for our products, but it would open for us again those of the South which do not have the Morrill tariff, and it would give us cotton again, while leaving us on good terms with the unionists and the separatists.”⁴ It was not contemplated that France should be drawn into the conflict when it could secure all the advantages by maintaining neutrality. An article in the *Morning Post* was quoted with approval, predicting that France probably would remain a spectator of events, but that its moral support would be accorded to those who defended the laws of nations.⁵ The unanimity of the French press, in condemning the act of Wilkes, was referred to, but it was made clear that the interests and the traditions of France traced for it the rôle of neutrality.⁶ On December 10, an article appeared which caused considerable apprehension to Dayton, because of the semi-official character of the *Constitutionnel*. In this, it was pointed out that the United States would have captured Mason and Slidell as well under the tricolor as under the flag of England. Some space was devoted to showing that France had no more historic bonds with the North than with the South, for France had helped to establish the independence of all the colonies. The proofs of affection and gratitude of the United States toward France were discounted. The idea was scouted that slavery was the alpha and omega of the struggle. “In sum, we do not see the shadow of a reason to refuse or to grudge our sympathies to the states of the South.” It could see no reason for sacrificing the English alliance in the present conflict. From this, the *Constitutionnel* launched into a panegyric upon that alliance: “The Anglo-French alliance is itself the general peace and security, it is the basis of civilization, it is the pivot of the modern world. For our part, we desire with all our heart that that union of two great intelligent peoples, strong and liberal, may be eternal. In the particular circumstances that we now pass through, we pray that England, having justice

⁴ *Constitutionnel*, Dec. 2, 1861, F. Gaillardet.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1861, Auguste Vitu.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Dec. 7, 1861, F. Gaillardet.

on its side, may obtain the satisfaction to which it has a right; and, returning very naturally to our own interests, we earnestly invoke the moment when the important market of America will be reopened to our industry and to our commerce, both languishing because of a crisis which is prolonged to the detriment of the entire world.”⁷ Dayton felt that this article was of a very obnoxious character. “That article, as you will observe if you have had time to look it over, advocates the policy of France making common cause with England against us. It looks likewise to the early recognition, by France and Great Britain, of the South as an independent power.”⁸ No doubt Dayton’s interpretation of this article was correct, despite the subsequent protestations of that Napoleonic organ that France should maintain its neutrality. Napoleon preferred to keep his policies to himself, paving the way with public opinion for action either way. On December 13, while calling attention to “the affinities of race and the traditions of origin” between France and the different “provinces” of the South, the *Constitutionnel* affirmed that the commercial interests of France were balanced between the South which furnished its cotton and the North which consumed its manufactured products and its wines, and the rôle for France to follow was that of neutrality.⁹ On December 15, this argument from the point of view of the selfish interests of France is made more clear, in the paragraph already quoted,¹⁰ to the effect that the sword of Charlemagne and Napoleon was only drawn when the interests and the glory of France were at stake. The idea, expressed by “two or three French papers,” of French mediation, or that France should offer to England its armed support, was rejected.¹¹

Among these “two or three” was the semi-official *Pays*. This paper had no difficulty in disposing of the question of

⁷ *Ibid.*, Dec. 10, 1861, A. Grenier.

⁸ Dayton to Seward, No. 95, Dec. 11, 1861.

⁹ *Constitutionnel*, Dec. 13, 1861, Auguste Vitu.

¹⁰ See above, p. 32.

¹¹ *Constitutionnel*, Dec. 15, 1861, Auguste Vitu.

law. Mason and Slidell were on an English ship and therefore on English territory. The Washington government could not claim the right to take the commissioners on the ground that they belonged to a nation at war with the United States for that would be to give to them the quality of belligerents and to admit a legal existence for the Confederacy. They could be recognized only as rebels and could be reclaimed from English territory only by extradition, though extradition would not apply here as their offense was political in its nature. Also, Wilkes had made a mistake when he made a definite seizure instead of a provisory one to be reviewed by a prize court. The commissioners could not be seized as soldiers, for they were not such. Neither could they be seized as diplomatic agents, for that carries inviolability.¹² There was no escape from the dilemma except to surrender the prisoners. But perhaps the most interesting articles of the whole controversy appear in this paper during the latter part of December. This becomes clear in a letter of Rost to Jefferson Davis, in which he says: "While the Emperor wishes to continue on good terms with the Government of the United States and would regret to see the Federal Navy destroyed, I cannot doubt that his sympathies and those of his Government are with us. A series of articles headed 'Reconnaissance des États Confédérés' now in course of publication in the 'Pays' newspaper are written in the bureaux of the Ministry of the Interior: they advocate the right of Secession, the cause of the South generally and its right to be recognized. Other articles of the same character have been recommended for publication in other papers by the Director of the press, but thus far have not been published, because most probably the editors of those papers expect money from us."¹³ The first of the articles in the Pays appeared on December 20. In this, the extent of the rebellion was put forth in its favor. "May we observe first, that eight million men, united in the same

¹² Pays, Dec. 6, 1861, A. Lomon.

¹³ Rost to Davis, No. 9, Dec. 24, 1861.

thought and the same end, are not, properly speaking, ordinary rebels." What did it matter if the former defenders of the famous right of insurrection found the right of separation ridiculous and deplorable. The Constitution was before all a work of precaution against the invasions of the central power. It was evident that the South was within its absolute right. There remained the question whether it was making proper use of that right. That was to raise the question of the true causes of the war. Among these, slavery could not be counted, for the war was brought about by an economic question complicated with an agrarian question.¹⁴ On December 22, the second article dealt with the slavery question. Slavery could not be the real cause for the reason that the blacks were not liked even in the North. Mrs. Stowe's great work, which had had tremendous influence in France, was quoted in proof of this.¹⁵ On December 28, in the last article of the series, the matter of nationality was returned to, and it was asked why the *Journal des Débats*, the *Siècle* and the *Temps* could defend the cause of Italy, Hungary and Poland against Austria and Russia, and express so much hatred against the South, which fought for an essentially identical cause. Referring to the Orleans princes fighting in the ranks of the Northern armies, it was asked why they should oppose in America a cause for which they contended in Europe. "The Convention said: 'Perish the colonies rather than a principle.'—Do the *Journal des Débats*, the *Siècle*, the *Temps* and the princes of Orléans go beyond this and say: 'Perish logic rather than our malice'?"¹⁶ In view of the relations of this paper with the Ministry of the Interior, an article appearing near the close of the year, sheds some light upon the significance of Thouvenel's note of December 3, to Mercier, supporting the British contention. It discussed the question whether that note might be regarded as the preface to intervention, or as

¹⁴ Pays, Dec. 20, 1861, A. Grandguillot.

¹⁵ Ibid., Dec. 22, 1861, A. Grandguillot.

¹⁶ Ibid., Dec. 20, 1861, A. Grandguillot.

an offer of mediation, and concluded that it appeared to be "a declaration of principles in an international question; a reservation for the future; at the most a warning to the Washington cabinet."¹⁷

Liberals were divided between their adherence to the cause of the Union, and their belief that the act of Wilkes was a violation of law and the consecration of a principle inimical to the interests of France and to the world. The *Journal des Débats* could only regret that the incident had occurred. It said: "Whatever may be the opinion that one adopts upon that subject, whether one approves or disapproves of the decision of the official jurisconsults [of England], the act of the officers of the federal ship is, however, profoundly regrettable, for at the same time that it furnishes at least a specious grief to the adversaries of the cause that the government at Washington represents in its battle with the states of the South, it will have for effect to weaken the just sympathies that that cause, which for us is the good cause, has met, and which it deserves to retain in Europe." At the same time the inconsistency of the English in intrenching themselves behind doctrines of the freedom of the seas was pointed out; and while it was admitted that the position of the United States would be equally inconsistent if it should defend the action of the Federal officer, the *Débats* expressed considerable doubt as to whether the captain of the San Jacinto had acted upon an order from the Federal government.¹⁸ The next day, it was admitted that it looked as if the officer had acted upon orders given some time before, but again the British position was shown to be weak. England had committed violations of the law of nations in the past beside which the acts of the San Jacinto would pass for trifles. Now the British were reversing themselves. "To repent is very fine and very virtuous, without doubt."¹⁹ The *Moniteur* was felicitated upon an article taking a mod-

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Dec. 27, 1861, Robert Mitchell.

¹⁸ *Journal des Débats*, Dec. 1, 1861, Louis Alloury.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Dec. 2, 1861, Xavier Raymond.

erate view of the matter, in contrast with the journals that advised making common cause with England and recognizing the Confederacy.²⁰ An article in the *Morning Post* had declared that the discussion was exhausted upon the Trent affair. The *Débats* answered that it might be closed for the English government, but it was not closed for public opinion in Europe and even in England. Reference was made to an article in the *Independence Belge* to the effect that the question of law was quite open to question, condemning the "strange precipitation" of the English government, and expressing the hope that the religious party and the party of the Bible with its anti-slavery sentiments would make itself heard in England, for recognition of the South would aid the cause of slavery.²¹ But even if England did desire the disruption of the Union, France was not in the same position. England had a double interest that France did not have; first, it would put off the development of the maritime and political power of the United States; and second, it would put, it was hoped, the southern agricultural republic under the exploitation of the industry and marine of England, which would in this case occupy the position held by the North in the past. Moreover, France had an interest in the maintenance of the Union, for in the event of war with England it would "feel cruelly the absence of the neutral American flag, the only one which England is accustomed and interested to respect, and which could in time of war, maintain to our profit the liberty of the seas." In addition to this, it would be to the interest of France to remain neutral in case of a war between England and the United States, for then there would be an abundant harvest for its maritime commerce. "And it is just at the moment when that unfortunate struggle is brewing, it is in the face of the duties and interests so clear of our country, that certain journals dare to speak to the public of seeking for us on this score some new adventure,

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Dec. 5, 1861, L. Alloury.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1861, Louis Alloury.

or rather let us say they dare to threaten it.”²² However, the belief was expressed “almost alone against everyone,” that war was not inevitable between England and the United States, though it was admitted that history shows that it is difficult to keep out of great wars, especially maritime wars. It was hoped that Palmerston would frame his demands so that the United States could meet them without offending national pride.²³ While it was admitted that if France should recognize the Confederacy, “the jurisconsults and the ‘classiques’ of international law, could still sustain, code in hand, that France has not broken neutrality,” still, “from the moral and political point of view, that pretended neutrality would no longer exist.”²⁴ “If England desires to accept the hand which a republic based upon slavery offers to it, let her do so! France, free in its actions, is not obliged to imitate it.”²⁵ From the moral and political point of view, France by recognizing the Confederacy, would commit a very serious act of intervention, however indirect, in favor of the South, since without throwing her sword into the balance, she would bring the weight of her influence into it. Thus, she would give her influence in the service of “a flag contrary to her political traditions, her sympathies and her principles.”²⁶ But it was hoped that the United States would submit to England without being seduced by a desire to conquer

²² Ibid., Dec. 7, 1861, Prévost-Paradol. In this connection, an Englishman said: “I find in Paris a general wish for the success of the North, partly on the ground that the North is supposed to be fighting for liberty against slavery, but much more because the United States are supposed to be the enemies of England” (Nassau William Senior, in his *Conversations with Distinguished Persons*, vol. 2, p. 168, April 11, 1862). This, no doubt, exaggerates the importance of the English side of the matter. Louis Blanc probably better expressed Liberal opinion, when he said, “It is of consequence to the whole earth that slavery should cease to dishonour civilization; but it is of less consequence to the whole earth whether the United States form two nations or only one” (Letters on England, trans. by James Hutton, letter No. xxx, Sept. 15, 1861).

²³ *Journal des Débats*, Dec. 13, 1861, F. Camus.

²⁴ Ibid., Dec. 14, 1861, Louis Alloury.

²⁵ Ibid., Dec. 14, 1861, Auguste Léo.

²⁶ Ibid., Dec. 16, 1861, Louis Alloury.

America to the pole.²⁷ Upon receiving the text of Thouvenel's note of December 3, the *Débats* in commenting upon it, expressed the hope that "the cabinet at Washington, taking counsel of its wisdom, its conciliating disposition, and its best interests, will hasten to disavow the commander of the San Jacinto and to accord to England the legitimate reparation which it demands."²⁸ However, if England should force war upon the United States it may be making the same mistake it made in 1812, and may simply bring the result of forcing the United States to build up a navy, and add another maritime power to the world.²⁹ On December 27, discussing Wilkes' report upon the affair, it says: "It may be said that Captain Wilkes has been guilty of an error, an infinitely regrettable mistake, and we have never, as for us, pretended the contrary; one can not say impartially that he has committed an *étouderie*, an act of provocation and of hostility without motive, a premeditated insult to the British flag, a deliberate crime against international law and the rights of neutrals." And it is added that it should not be proclaimed so loudly that the rights are all on one side and the wrongs on the other.³⁰ On January 9, it says that according to its opponents "if we do not shortly recognize the South, that will be an abomination in the eyes of Vattel, Pufendorf and Grotius. Eh bien! with all the respect that we owe to those estimable jurists, when it is a question of the official recognition of slavery, we are not able to attach an exclusive importance to the legal point of view, even if it were as clear as day." The *Débats* sympathized with the maritime powers in the endeavor to settle the legal question now, once for all, but it did not believe in going to war over the question, which would be as if "two advocates should take up their swords over the interpretation of an article of the Civil Code."³¹

²⁷ Ibid., Dec. 16, 1861, Xavier Raymond.

²⁸ Ibid., Dec. 24, 1861, Louis Alloury.

²⁹ Ibid., Dec. 24, 1861, F. Camus.

³⁰ Ibid., Dec. 27, 1861, Louis Alloury.

³¹ Ibid., Jan. 9, 1862, Auguste Léo.

The *Revue des Deux Mondes* was astonished. It was an "incomprehensible provocation," and England, suffering from a cotton famine, might invoke the supreme law of public safety, recognize the Confederacy, and open the seas to the cotton commerce.³² It was hoped that Wilkes would not be sustained. In disavowing his action, the United States would only pay homage to a doctrine it had always professed. It would be really a triumph for that doctrine to apply it against a nation and a government which had always contested or violated the rights of neutrals, but which would be forced to abandon its arbitrary pretensions after such a precedent. But it had no sympathy with that part of the press that wanted to involve France against the United States in distress, if war should break out between it and England. That country might desire the dissolution of the United States in order to weaken a political rival or to secure cotton, but France had no such political or commercial interest. Moreover, while the seizure of the commissioners was a violation of neutral rights, still the Trent affair was only an isolated exception in the maritime history of the United States. It was a manifestation of hostility against English policy, not a menace to the principles and the security of France. The United States would not cease to be what it had always been, the defender of the freedom of the seas. It was the traditional friend of France, while the South was fighting for the institution of slavery, with which the French could have no sympathy. "All ideas of generosity prevent us from giving a hasty recognition to the Southern Confederacy." It was true that France was in need of cotton, and it was losing its revenue from tobacco. But if England should go to war, the blockade would be removed and cotton and tobacco released, while a large part of the belligerent commerce would pass under the French flag. "Thus selfish interests agree with liberal principles in recommending neutrality."³³

³² *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xxxvi, pp. 754-6, Dec. 1, 1861, E. Forcade.

³³ *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi, pp. 1012-18, Dec. 15, 1861, E. Forcade.

To the *Revue Contemporaine*, the removal of the commissioners appeared as a barbarism of another age,³⁴ but some excuse for the Americans was found in the fact that the United States had not subscribed to the Declaration of Paris. The right of visit being admitted, the commissioners might have been removed as contraband of war, on the ground that they were emissaries of war and carriers of rebel dispatches. They were not protected by a diplomatic character as the Confederacy had not been recognized, and as emissaries of rebels they did not have the right of asylum that belongs to fugitives. The case of Henry Laurens, seized by England in 1780, under similar circumstances, was recalled, and it was argued that he could only have been seized as "an emissary of rebels, a hired plotter."³⁵ However, it would be difficult for France to remain a passive spectator in case of war. The French flag must float on the side of the freedom of the seas, the rights of neutrals and the progress of maritime law.³⁶ For the remainder of the war, this periodical was the consistent friend of the South.

The London correspondent of the *Revue Britannique* said that perhaps the right of asylum had been violated, but the English government was even more to blame, for if the country of Clarkson and Wilberforce had declared from the beginning that it would in no case recognize the independence of the Southern States so long as they did not recognize gradual, if not immediate, emancipation, the present dispute would not have arisen.³⁷ The *Revue Germanique* felt that while Wilkes would have been without excuse if he had committed the act against France, still toward England he was only applying British precedents, a fact that French public opinion was beginning to realize.³⁸

³⁴ *Revue Contemporaine* vol. lix, p. 393, Nov. 29, 1861, J.-E. Horn.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. lix, pp. 540-53, Dec. 15, 1861, Xavier Eyma.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. lix, p. 582, Dec. 15, 1861, J.-E. Horn.

³⁷ *Revue Britannique*, 1861, vol. vi, pp. 471-2, Dec., 1861, Endymion Pieraggi.

³⁸ *Revue Germanique*, vol. xix, p. 157, Jan. 1, 1862, A. Nefftzer.

As for the recognition of the South, which was being preached at Liverpool and Manchester and in the "devoted" Paris journals, that would only push the North to fury. It would ally itself with the negroes in a slave insurrection with its attendant horrors, and nothing would be gained for Europe.³⁹ The Correspondant admitted that the arrest of the commissioners was a mistake ("une faute"), but asked if it could be called a crime when the right of visit was admitted, the right to seize dispatches was not contested, and the right of conducting the ship to a prize court was not contested. Moreover, the captain of the Trent was not without reproach, for he knew the character of his passengers and knew that the Queen's declaration of neutrality had prohibited the carrying of dispatches.⁴⁰

Even with the anti-Southern press, the dispatch of Thouvenel was received with approval and even enthusiasm.⁴¹ The Presse gave to it the credit of any solution that might be arrived at.⁴² The Siècle, organ of the Republicans, believed that Thouvenel had expressed the doctrine that France had always sustained upon the inviolability of a neutral flag, and hoped that from the dispute would come a more explicit recognition of the rights of neutrals, a more strict delimitation of what goods, objects or persons could be considered contraband of war, and even hoped that all maritime property abstaining from hostile acts would be declared inviolable. The only regret of the Siècle was that the note had stated the position of France so absolutely that the government of France could not now offer its good offices or accept a demand for arbitration. While supporting the British contention as the correct principle of international law, this paper evidently believed the present matter

³⁹ Ibid., vol. xviii, p. 490, Dec. 15, 1861, Charles Dollfus.

⁴⁰ Correspondant, vol. liv, pp. 754-9, Dec., 1861, P. Douhaire.

⁴¹ But see Charivari, Dec. 25, 1861, Clément Caraguel, which feared that the note would draw France into the struggle on the side of "that odious institution, slavery."

⁴² Presse, Jan. 2-3, 1862, J. Mahias; Jan. 11, 1862, J. Mahias.

was a proper subject for arbitration, particularly as the British were reversing themselves upon the question. The case of Henry Laurens, who went from the United States to Martinique, in 1780, took passage on the Dutch packet boat *Mercury*, and was seized by the British cruiser *Vestal*, was given as an example. The only difference in the cases was that Martinique belonged to an ally of the revolted colonies; and the *San Jacinto* had not seized the ship, while the *Vestal* had taken envoy, dispatches and ship. In each case the envoys were on their way to a neutral port on a neutral ship.⁴³

In short, even the best friends of the Union could find no excuse for Wilkes in international law, except that he was applying to England her own precedents which were admittedly barbarous, while the semi-official press, "independent and devoted," went so far as to advocate recognition of the Confederacy and war with England against the Union, if an Anglo-American war should break out. Bigelow says that our friends among the French people were demoralized; that there was a time within the three days after the news was received when "one could have counted on his fingers about all the people in Europe not Americans who still retained any hope or expectation of the perpetuity of our Union." They took it for granted that we would fight until we were satisfied that there was no use of fighting longer, and then we would agree upon some terms of separation. At the suggestion of Garnier-Pagès, a republican deputy, Bigelow prepared a letter presenting the matter in a more favorable light to the Union, to which the venerable General Scott, then in Paris, affixed his name, and which was published in the Paris papers.⁴⁴ But hopes for the preservation of the Union were almost gone, and the friends of the Union were much perturbed to see their ideal democracy apparently involved on the side of despotism on the open seas.

⁴³ *Siècle*, Jan. 3, 1862, T.-N. Benard.

⁴⁴ Bigelow, *Retrospections of an Active Life*, vol. 1, pp. 384-90.

Faced by the imminence of war, the news of the surrender of Mason and Slidell came as a great relief to Europe. The satisfaction of the liberal public was "of the kind that ignorant and superstitious populations experience when they suddenly see the kindly sunlight reappear in the sky after they had thought it extinguished by a passing eclipse." The *Débats* seemed to draw a peculiar satisfaction from the contemplation of the gains of England. "The first advantage that England will draw from the extradition of Messrs. Mason and Slidell is a striking condemnation pronounced by itself upon itself. The second, which is just as good as the first, is the resentment of the American people." After this danger the American people would fight only the harder, while England would become more prudent in its relations with the South. "Already the clearest result of the Trent incident, is the explosion of sympathy which broke out in France, and even in a portion of the English nation, in favor of the unionist cause." "When the Trent incident transported us from the domain of abstraction into that of reality, when it was necessary to represent New York burned by English bombs, and the nation abolitionist par excellence, extending a beseeching hand to the planters, when a certain press forced us to place before our minds, as a possible eventuality, the image of a democratic France destroying in the United States one of the most glorious works of monarchical France, and the tricolored flag consecrating itself to slavery in the same places where the flag of white was deployed for the cause of the liberty of peoples; on that day, France made up its mind, and the quarrel of the South and North became with us definitely decided against the South. Had America only this consolation for the diplomatic check which it accepts with characteristic nobility, this consolation should suffice."⁴⁵ There is no doubt that the final settlement of the matter redounded to the advantage of the Union. Liberals had been justified in their faith in it; their opponents had been confounded; the Union had been true to lib-

⁴⁵ *Journal des Débats*, Jan. 11, 1862, J.-J. Weiss.

eral principles. They looked back with some shame on those six weeks when Europe was full of alarms and rumors of war, so much in contrast with the coolness and moderation which the American government had manifested throughout. Such things might be avoided if the governments of France and Great Britain would make it clear that the South would not be recognized, for this was the thing upon which the South counted. The secession was a speculation upon cotton. Europe should hasten to show that that speculation was a poor one.⁴⁶ Upon receiving the full text of Seward's note, the leading liberal organ passed this final judgment: "The ground upon which he places himself is chosen with a skill that no impartial person can misunderstand. . . . America was condemned upon a question of fact; but in accepting the condemnation as just, she has consecrated a principle which is all in her favor."⁴⁷ It was a proof of strength, not of weakness, and America only paid homage to the principles she had herself defended for so many years.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xxxvii, pp. 498-504, Jan. 15, 1862, E. Forcade.

⁴⁷ *Journal des Débats*, Jan. 15, 1862, J.-J. Weiss.

⁴⁸ *Siècle*, Jan. 10, 1862, Émile de la Bédollière.

CHAPTER III

DISTRESS AMONG THE WORKMEN

A certain unsympathetic French writer referred to the Southern cause as a speculation in cotton. It is true that the South had based many hopes upon the belief that cotton was king, but there were economic forces at work other than those resulting from a shortage of cotton. One of these was the failure of the wheat harvest. In England, where the wheat crop failed at the same time, necessitating large importations from the United States, the opponents of intervention were able to point out that war with the United States might break the blockade and bring cotton to England, but it would cut off the much more essential staple of wheat.¹ The situation of the English did not pass unnoticed in France.² But as the French were much less dependent upon foreign supply, even in time of a crop failure, it is not likely that they were deterred by the same considerations. On the contrary, the failure of the harvests caused a rise in the cost of bread, and this in conjunction with widespread unemployment, led to greater suffering, and furnished those who desired to break the blockade with that much more force behind the humanitarian argument.

The wheat shortage was particularly marked in 1861 and 1862, just when the danger of intervention was greatest. Yancey and Rost wrote in the fall of 1861 that the deficiency in the harvest was estimated to equal in value two hundred million dollars.³ The Pays gave the deficit as about twelve million hectolitres below normal. But this was made worse by the fact that drought in the southwest, where maize or-

¹ Louis Bernard Schmidt, in *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, vol. xvi, July, 1918, pp. 400-439.

² *Presse*, July 20, 1862, Ad. Gaiffe.

³ Yancey and Rost to Hunter, No. 8, Oct. 5, 1861.

dinarily took the place of wheat, had reduced the maize crop by two-thirds, thus leading to increased demand for wheat.⁴ The crop of 1862 was better, and wheat to the value of only 147 million francs was imported as compared with 325.6 million for 1861.⁵

The earliest effects of the war were felt in other fields than the cotton industry. The government itself experienced a large loss of revenue through the cessation of importation of American tobacco. French exportation was even more seriously affected. French exports to America were mostly luxuries, wines, brandy, millinery, furniture, worsteds, mixed goods and especially silks.⁶ These were things that could well be dispensed with for a period, and the disorders of the war led to the cessation of their importation. The following table ⁷ shows how abrupt this was, but to these figures should be added those for the large indirect trade through England.

	1860 First eight months	1861 First eight months	Diminution
Linens	186,485	77,330	109,155
Silks	73,150,418	22,385,294	50,765,124
Silk floss goods	63,572		63,572
Worsteds	22,799,649	6,520,622	16,279,027
Mohair "Tissus de poil"	5,775		5,775
Hair-cloth	840		840
Cottons	2,886,297	264,318	2,621,979
Prepared skins	4,436,370	882,502	3,553,868
Skin and leather goods	5,419,237	1,451,546	3,967,691
	108,948,643	31,581,612	77,367,031

For the full year 1860, exportations of millinery amounted to 5,533,000 fr., for 1861, 3,905,000 fr.; furniture dropped from 6,900,000 fr. to 6,481,000 fr. Wine exportation dropped from 195 millions of litres in 1860 to 177½ millions in 1861, but these figures for wines are not of much value, as French wine production was poor for the crop exported

⁴ Pays, Oct. 4, 1861, A. Lomon.

⁵ Revue Contemporaine, vol. lxvi, pp. 637-638, Feb. 15, 1863, J.-E. Horn.

⁶ Constitutionnel, May 8, 1862, Paulin Limayrac.

⁷ Ibid., Oct. 7, 1861, Auguste Vitu.

in 1861.⁸ The manufacturing situation seems to have been relieved somewhat in 1861, by numerous orders from England, Germany and Russia, to Lyons and Saint-Étienne,⁹ and French exportations went from 1,926,300,000 in 1861 to 2,189,000,000 in 1862.¹⁰

The most serious complaint came from the silk industry. In Lyons and Saint-Étienne, which were the centers of that industry, there was great suffering. The papers appealed for private aid for the workmen and the minister of the interior placed 350,000 fr. for Lyons and 220,000 for Saint-Étienne, to be applied in charity.¹¹ Charles Levavasseur, a manufacturer of Rouen, reported that at Paris the cabinet-making, millinery, glove, and bronze industries, and others devoted to luxuries, were affected or paralyzed by the civil wars and revolutions in the United States, Chile, Mexico, Buenos Ayres, Peru, and Venezuela.¹² In addition to this, the high tariff in the United States came in for its share of blame.¹³ Yancey and Rost wrote that the immense number of poor laborers thrown out of employ were suffering very greatly, and that discontent was being manifested. "We have heard of large numbers of them assembling in murmuring complaints not far from Paris, and that on night before last, an attempt at insurrection was made and suppressed in one of the suburbs."¹⁴ The government even had to defend itself against the accusation that the sufferings of French industry were due to the recent commercial treaty with England.¹⁵

By the beginning of the year 1862, conditions had become serious, and Thouvenel told Dayton that petitions and memo-

⁸ *Journal des Débats*, Feb. 25, 1862, Chemin-Dupontès.

⁹ *Constitutionnel*, Oct. 7, 1861, Auguste Vitu.

¹⁰ *Revue Contemporaine*, vol. lxvi, pp. 637-8, Feb. 15, 1863, J.-E. Horn.

¹¹ *Constitutionnel*, Jan. 21, 1862, Auguste Vitu.

¹² *Journal des Débats*, Apr. 15, 1862, Henri Baudrillart.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Oct. 19, 1861, J.-J. Weiss.

¹⁴ Yancey and Rost to Hunter, No. 8, Oct. 5, 1861.

¹⁵ *Constitutionnel*, Sept. 30, 1861, Auguste Vitu; *Journal des Débats*, Apr. 15, 1862, Henri Baudrillart.

rials were being addressed daily to the Emperor.¹⁶ The condition of the workers in the cotton manufacturing districts began to receive much notice in the newspapers. The *Débats* gave the value of the annual product of French cotton manufacture at from seven hundred to eight hundred million francs, which was small compared with the English product, where the annual exportation alone amounted to 1,000,000,000 fr.¹⁷ The *Siècle* gave the French product as five hundred million.¹⁸ In November, 1862, the number of persons in distress from the cotton crisis was given as 100,000, with the number increasing.¹⁹ The *Moniteur* said that the cotton industry existed in forty departments, but in only fifteen or twenty was it of any real importance, while a quarter of the spindles were in the department of the *Seine-Inférieure*.²⁰ By the end of the year 1862, there were 130,000 men out of work in the *Seine-Inférieure*, or 260,000 to 390,000 persons, counting dependents.²¹ The distress seems to have been mostly in this one department. The *arrondissement* most affected was *Yvetot*, and after this, *Rouen*. In the *arrondissement* of *Dieppe*, there were 10,000 workmen out of work, and about 14,000 in that of *Havre*. In the parish of *Robertot*, with a population of 600, there were 468 weavers with no resource against hunger and cold. Some of them tried to sustain themselves with a kind of paste made of coarse bran, water and herbs. Those who could sometimes get bread were considered fortunate. Half naked children went into the country to beg soup or potatoes from the farmers. Sometimes they had to go so far that they could not return to their homes until the next day. The *Siècle* said there were nearly three hundred thousand workmen in the *Seine-Inférieure* in mid-winter in the great-

¹⁶ Dayton to Seward, No. 127, Mar. 18, 1862.

¹⁷ *Journal des Débats*, Apr. 18, 1862, F. Camus.

¹⁸ *Siècle*, Jan. 27, 1863, Émile de la Bédollière.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Nov. 17, 1862, Émile de la Bédollière.

²⁰ *Moniteur*, Dec. 8, 1862.

²¹ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xliii, pp. 230-1, Jan. 1, 1863, E. Forcade.

est destitution.²² To aid this misery there was little help coming from the rich or well-to-do classes. After constant appeals through the newspapers, with the greatest publicity, the sum of 234,000 fr. was subscribed in Paris by January 8, 1863, for relief, where ten million was necessary. Perhaps double that was subscribed in Rouen. Yet the loss in wages to the workmen was perhaps six million francs a month.²³ The government had to come to the relief of the sufferers.

As early as February, 1862, there had been voted, without opposition in either the Corps Législatif or Sénat, two million francs for the relief of the suffering by providing work or in direct charity.²⁴ On January 26, 1863, another five million was voted by the Corps Législatif without opposition. This was intended to be applied, in part in public works, but as some persons, such as women, could not be aided in this way, and the amounts needed would be large, the newspapers insisted that contributions should continue to come from individuals.²⁵ Some relief to the cotton industry came through the efforts of the Société du Prince Impérial which aided the cotton artisans to enter the wool manufacturing industry.²⁶

In 1862, all industry had suffered from the effects of the Civil War. In 1863, it was only the cotton industry, but what was lost in extent was gained in intensity,²⁷ and in the first few months of this year the poor endured great hardships in the Seine-Inférieure. The city of Havre suffered more than any other French port, for it had enjoyed a great amount of trade with America. Its cotton trade with the United States had afforded support for thousands of laborers and small tradesmen, and as the war progressed, the flag

²² *Siècle*, Dec. 27, 1862, Taxile Delord. Based upon an article in the *Temps*.

²³ *Journal des Débats*, Jan. 8, 1863, J.-J. Weiss; *Presse*, Jan. 12, 1863, Jules Ferry.

²⁴ Corps Législatif, Feb. 28, 1862; Senate, Mar. 1, 1862.

²⁵ *Journal des Débats*, Jan. 28, 1863, Auguste Léo; *Constitutionnel*, Jan. 28, 1863, Joncières.

²⁶ *Constitutionnel*, Apr. 1, 1864, Émile Chédieu; May 7, 1864.

²⁷ *Journal des Débats*, Jan. 28, 1863, Auguste Léo.

of the United States became a comparatively rare visitant there. Cotton operators realized great fortunes, but with these exceptions the town was a great sufferer.²⁸

There was some controversy in France as to why it was that the cotton district of the Seine-Inférieure suffered so greatly while the rival district in Alsace around Mulhouse went through no such suffering, and the looms continued to run at Guebwiller, in the Vosges. Imbert-Kœchlin, a manufacturer of Mulhouse, wrote to the *Industrial Alsacien* in the latter part of 1862, that the shortage in cotton was not so great as might be supposed, and that cotton could be procured if the buyer was willing to pay the price. He gave the Liverpool stock at 264,000 bales, and that of Havre at 53,611 bales. He admitted that cotton was scarce in Alsace, but the looms were running there. Some manufacturers were receiving great credit for liberality in caring for the existence of their men while out of work, but he asserted that there was more of calculation than philanthropy in this, as these manufacturers were making great profits by ceasing production and putting cottons at a premium.²⁹ If there was a famine in cotton, how was it that the hand looms of Picardy to the number of 50,000, and those of Caux with 64,000 more, had not ceased to run, asked the *Presse*? The stock of Liverpool for the end of the year 1862 was given as 433,950 bales, or nearly two-thirds of the stock of the year before, with, at an offhand calculation, 2,000,000 bales arriving during the year, of which 100,000 came from the United States. The manufacturers excused themselves on the ground of the weakness of the resources of a large number, the fear of the commercial treaty with England, and the like. The *Presse* asserted that the manufacturers of Normandy, as well as the cotton lords of Lancashire, had "something on their consciences."³⁰

²⁸ Dispatch of James O. Putnam, U. S. Consul at Havre, Jan. 25, 1864, *Commercial Relations of the United States*, 1864, p. 199.

²⁹ *Presse*, Dec. 28, 1862, Alfred Darimon.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Jan 12, 1863, Jules Ferry.

Alphonse Cordier, writing in the *Temps* of January 21, 1863, asserted that there was a cotton famine; that the annual consumption was 350,000 bales a month for Europe, while the stock at Liverpool was only 433,950 bales, or about enough to last five weeks, as the consumption was counted in American bales and the stock in Indian bales. On the other hand, the *English Economist* estimated that the arrivals from India, Egypt, Brazil and Asia Minor would provide the English with 28,000 bales a week, or enough to provide work four out of six days in the week. The *Presse* pointed out that the Liverpool stock had passed the estimates of the *Economist* by 35,000 bales. The Indian cotton crop of 1862, which would begin to arrive at Liverpool in May, 1863, was estimated at 1,500,000 bales, while Egypt, Brazil, Asia Minor and Algeria were expected to send 500,000 more. The total stock of Europe for 1863, without counting any possible arrivals from the United States, was expected to reach 2,560,000 bales, or enough to keep the looms running throughout Europe, three days a week. When the *Presse* denied the correctness of the findings of the committee of Rouen, that there was a famine in cotton, it asserted that it was supported by all of Alsace, the journals of Rouen, and the *Courrier du Havre*. It was even said that the assertions of the existence of a famine were intended to bring about the breaking of the blockade of the South.³¹ The *Constitutionnel* admitted that work was not stopped in Alsace and the *Pas-de-Calais*.³² The *Siècle* admitted the scarcity of cotton, but denied that there was a famine.³³

By July, 1864, the *Presse* felt able to assert that King Cotton had been dethroned, and gave the following table:³⁴

³¹ *Ibid.*, Jan. 26, 1863, Jules Ferry.

³² *Constitutionnel*, Feb. 1, 1863, Auguste Vitu.

³³ *Siècle*, Nov. 7, 1862, T.-N. Benard.

³⁴ *Presse*, July 8, 1864, A. Sanson.

Importations into England	First Trimester 1862 Cwt.	First Trimester 1863 Cwt.	First Trimester 1864 Cwt.
United States	5,276	3,401	1,787
Bahamas and Bermudas		11,971	63,940
Mexico		14,781	49,227
Brazil	39,469	49,749	61,210
Turkey	4,432	12,601	47,756
Egypt	196,085	233,642	309,091
English India	260,605	387,701	459,028
China	9	26,951	105,476
Other countries	68,262	52,179	34,453
	574,138	793,036	1,131,968

In fact, the large importations from Egypt and India brought about a curious monetary disturbance in England and France. The cotton bought from the United States had been paid for in the manufactures of Europe, but the Oriental cotton had to be paid for in the precious metals and it was not known how far the drainage of the precious metals from Europe might go.³⁵

France had been making strenuous efforts to develop cotton production in its own colonies, particularly Algeria, while something was hoped for from other colonies, such as French Guiana. Shares of stock in a company to develop Algerian cotton were advertised in the papers, and great hopes were built upon that colony, though the *Revue Contemporaine* had pointed out that Algeria had not been a successful cotton producing country, partly due to the small European population of only 200,000.³⁶ It was even thought that cotton might be grown in France, and it was reported that efforts in this direction were being made in some of the departments.³⁷ As a matter of fact, the quantity of Algerian cotton did not increase during the war. This was partly explained by the fact that in 1852, the government had begun

³⁵ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xlviii, p. 995, Dec. 15, 1863, E. Forcade.

³⁶ *Revue Contemporaine*, vol. lxi, pp. 810-14, Apr. 30, 1862, J.-E. Horn.

³⁷ *Nation*, Jan. 8, 1863. See *Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Nations*, 1863, p. 146.

the policy of aiding Algerian cotton with premiums and the like, which were regulated to decrease gradually. While the premiums were high the culture grew, but when the government ceased to guarantee the profits by ceasing to buy directly and by decreasing the premiums, the growth had almost stopped, despite the effects of the American civil war.³⁸

To recapitulate, the economic effects of the war upon France were, during 1861, principally the decrease of French exportation, particularly in the silk industry; during 1862, this was added to the cotton crisis; during 1863, there seems to have been no distress except in the cotton manufacturing industry, and this was limited mostly to one department, though here it was of great intensity; while by 1864, importations from other countries brought relief to the cotton industry.

This chapter has anticipated the progress of events, but it helps to explain what follows.

³⁸ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. lii, pp. 692-717, Aug. 1, 1864, Louis Reybaud (de l'Institut).

CHAPTER IV

PROPOSALS OF MEDIATION

The discussions arising out of the Trent affair mark the beginning of a campaign that was carried on by the Imperialist press for a year and a half in favor of action in behalf of the South. It took various forms—proposals of arbitration, active intervention, breaking the blockade, an armistice, recognition of the Confederacy—but all were intended to serve the same end, to aid the South. A propaganda against the Union was carried on, and every effort was made to show the insincerity of the North, its brutality, its inferiority. The war was held to be hopeless, a needless shedding of blood, a campaign of hatred, contrary to the Constitution and with no intelligent purpose. And above all it was insisted that slavery counted for nothing among the causes of the struggle. At the same time, the sufferings of Europe were dwelt upon, and the appeal was made to patriotism, self-interest and humanity. In opposition to this campaign stood the press of the Liberal Coalition, muzzled to the extent that it could not attack directly the government policy, although free to discuss the issues. The same conflict occurred among the orators in the Chambers, where the Liberals had an opportunity to attack the government. These debates were published in the papers and spread among the people.

The obstruction of the port of Charleston by the sinking of the "stone fleet" afforded an opportunity for the Imperialists. It was called "barbarous." What would the Liberals say if the French government, under the pretext of civil war, should block the port of Havre or Marseilles?¹ Even the *Moniteur* was moved to break its official reserve. It spoke of "a sentiment of profound regret and repulsion"

¹ *Constitutionnel*, Jan. 12, 1862, Auguste Vitu.

at "that act, not of war, but of vengeance."² The Opinion Nationale found this article to be imprudent, and offered a defense of the Federal action. In a somewhat violent answer, the Constitutionnel asserted that the destruction of the port of Charleston consummated the ruin of the Federal compact and condemned definitely the aggressive policy of the North. The North had treated the South as an enemy, and a foreign enemy even. Did that not render the two nations irreconcilable?³ The Presse thought it would be more logical in those who were so exercised over the matter, to confine their wrath to those who aimed at the preservation and extension of the odious institution of slavery and who, to that end, had involved their country in the disasters of a civil war.⁴ Dayton wrote that "the effect of the blockade, the permanent destruction of the harbor at Charleston, the hopelessness of our cause, *all taken for granted*, and all impressed upon the public mind here by the English press, have had a damaging influence."⁵ The Confederate commissioners even had hopes of active interference from Europe. "The prevailing and doubtless correct impression here is, that these two Governments have remonstrated in strong terms and also protested against the sinking of the 'stone fleet' in the main channel at Charleston, and that they will directly interfere in some way. Some indications are that the interference will go to the extent of a demand for an armistice and that the differences of boundary between the North and South shall be settled by these Powers."⁶ Even at that early period, an armistice was being discussed.

The effects of the Federal blockade were being felt by this time, and the Débats felt called upon to show that an attempt to break it would be useless, for even if the block-

² Moniteur, Jan. 11, 1862.

³ Constitutionnel, Jan. 20, 1862, Auguste Vitu.

⁴ Presse, Feb. 13, 1862, J. Mahias.

⁵ Dayton to Seward, No. 109, Jan. 27, 1862.

⁶ Yancey and Mann to Hunter, No. 14, Jan. 27, 1862 (Pickett Papers).

ade were broken there was little likelihood that cotton in any quantities could be got to the ports from the interior. Besides, "Under what pretext will they declare that blockade non-existent? Is it not because it would not be effective? Then how does that ineffective blockade, which has no real existence, prevent cotton from arriving in Europe?"⁷

The *Débats* was able to take the aggressive when it quoted with approval an article in the *Courrier du Havre* attacking the South for maintaining commerce destroyers, which it said were not necessarily to be excused simply because they had been maintained in the wars of the Revolution and the Empire; and an article in the *Journal du Havre* which reminded its readers that the right of seizure was limited in international law by the necessity that the capture be submitted to a prize court. In fact, said the *Journal du Havre*, simple good sense teaches that it is impossible to permit ships provided with more or less regular titles to attack, burn or sink ships in the open sea without exposing all ships to suffer those acts of violence. It feared that the ships of France and Great Britain would be thus destroyed for the possible precious metals in them. The two *Havre* papers called upon the maritime powers of Europe to consider means of putting an end to the enterprises of the Confederate ships, Sumter and Nashville, which they did not hesitate to call "pirates."⁸

The matter of French interference in America was brought to a head by a debate in the Senate over the projet d'adresse to the Emperor, reported February 17, 1862, and providing that: "Like Your Majesty, it [the government] has recognized that the amicable relations of France with the United States dictated to the French cabinet a policy of neutrality upon the basis of that distressing dispute, and that the struggle would be so much the shorter in that it were not complicated with foreign interferences."⁹ On February 24, this

⁷ *Journal des Débats*, Jan. 13, 1862, Prévost-Paradol; Jan. 28, 1862, Auguste Léo.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Feb. 11, 1862, Louis Ailoury.

⁹ Senate, Feb. 17, 1862.

clause came up for discussion, and after the Marquis de Boissy, an anglophobe of that day, had made a fervent appeal for neutrality on the ground that such a policy was opposed to the interest of England, Mr. Billault, spokesman for the Emperor before the Chambers, said: "In truth, the Emperor has a friendship for the United States, a sincere desire to see them become pacified, a disposition to further as much as he can that reconciliation which is so desirable; but as for doing anything that could be in contradiction to those sentiments, which are also those of France, the Senate may be tranquil, the Emperor is not so disposed."¹⁰ Billault was believed to have closed, for the time being at least, all hopes of the South that France would interfere to break the blockade,¹¹ and was considered to have applied practically that clause in the Emperor's address to the Chambers, in which he declared that "So long as the rights of neutrals are respected, we must limit ourselves to prayers that those dissensions will soon end."

In March, the American question came before the Corps Législatif. The projet d'adresse in this body dealt with this matter as follows (paragraph 5): "The civil war which devastates America causes grave injury to our industry and our commerce; we make most ardent prayers that those dissensions may have an early end. The Corps Législatif strongly approves that Your Majesty has in that crisis, and especially in the recent conflict between America and England, thought only of having the rights of neutrals respected. A government which takes right and justice for its invariable rule soon becomes the arbiter of the peace of the world." An amendment, to take the place of this paragraph, was proposed by Jules Favre, Hénon, Darimon, Ernest Picard and Émile Ollivier, which read: "France should not interfere in the civil war which devastates the republic of the United States of America; but it declares strongly that its sympathies are attached to the states of the

¹⁰ Ibid., Feb. 24, 1862.

¹¹ Dayton to Seward, No. 120, Feb. 27, 1862.

North, defenders of right and humanity. It hopes that their victory will lead to the abolition of slavery, and that thus, once more, it will have proved that the most grave crises can not be disastrous to people who do not separate democracy and liberty." However, this amendment was withdrawn in favor of another presented by Morin, Lemer cier, Guyard-Delalain, the Marquis d'Andelarre and Achille Jubinal, more reserved in character, and reading: "The civil war which devastates America causes grave injury to our industry and our commerce; we make most ardent prayers that those dissensions may have an early end, and that the great principle of the abolition of slavery may come victorious from the struggle engaged upon it." The remainder of the paragraph was to remain as in the projet. Morin (de la Drôme) explained that his amendment did not mention either the North or the South, but only expressed a principle and did not depart from the language proper for a neutral. It only remained, he said, to prove that in reality the question of slavery was the cause and the only cause of the conflict in America. He admitted that before the present crisis he had thought that the stories in the newspapers and the accounts of travelers, as well as those "contained in a celebrated novel which was read so eagerly" a few years before, had exaggerated the horrors of slavery. But now he had arrived at the conclusion that he had been mistaken, and told of the burning of some slaves; the application of lynch law to a certain Northerner who had aided a slave to escape; a slave trader, Nathaniel Gordon, who threw sixty negroes into the sea when chased by an American cruiser, half of those remaining in the ship dying from suffocation and ill-treatment, and yet with only a third of the negroes remaining, leaving enough for the trader to have made three hundred per cent if he had reached Cuba. The tariff could not be alleged as a cause of the dispute, for it was only since the separation that the Morrill tariff, with high duties, had been imposed. The tariff at the time of separation had been almost one of free trade. The election of Lincoln had signified only the

firm will to circumscribe slavery, to prevent its extension. Abolition was not proposed, but the South knew that restriction upon the extension of slavery would strike it with death. He offered praise for America "which had admitted and practiced all the liberties" and referred to the fact that de Tocqueville had seen in American society the future model for that of Europe. There could come no danger to France from adopting the amendment, for the United States would be thankful to have had words of sympathy given to them, if the Union were sustained, while if the separation were accomplished, the Southern states would understand from the words of the Address that the first condition for entrance into the family of civilized states was to deliver themselves from an institution which was only a plague to them, and they would be thankful later to have been given that counsel.

Calvet-Rogniat, in opposition to the amendment, dwelt upon the sufferings of the workmen in Lyons, Saint-Étienne, Rouen, Lille and other industrial cities, and Granier de Cassagnac argued that even the expression of a desire by the Chamber would amount to an interference in the internal politics of the United States, and that logically France would have to follow such an expression by demanding the abolition of slavery everywhere. Religiously, morally, philosophically considered, slavery was a question upon which nearly all were agreed. Billault, speaking for the government, closed the discussion with an address in which he contended that it would be impolitic in dealing with a struggle which France would like to see ended in a reconciliation, to agitate the very question that was at the basis of the dispute. Of course, the amendment was defeated when put to a vote, but it had served the purpose for which it was intended, in giving the Opposition an opportunity to bring their opinions before the public and in drawing the government into a statement of its position. The fifth paragraph then was adopted, but not before Arman, a deputy who was engaged in the shipbuilding business, and who later acquired considerable notoriety

through having built a number of ironclads for the Confederate government, had expressed the hope that the latest military events might pave the way to a friendly intervention which would hasten the agreement that was imperiously called for by humanity as well as commercial interests.¹²

There was agitation among industrial and commercial interests in France as well as in England, to relieve their troubles by the policy that they thought would work its results most quickly, that is, to favor the South. As a matter of fact, the loss of Northern trade, in the event of war, would have been a serious blow to France, and cotton might have been as far off as ever.¹³ Liberals were convinced that the means least likely to end the war was to persist in the "equivocal and indecisive policy" of which the English journals and the *Constitutionnel* were the organs, of maintaining and perpetuating in the separated States the illusion that Europe would intervene in the quarrel. The Emperor's address to the Chambers and the statement of Mr. Billault, in the Senate, were quoted in support of this statement of the position of France, and contrasted with the position of the government journals. This policy, expressed by the Emperor and defended by Mr. Billault, was accepted by the Liberals as their own.¹⁴ The wide variance between the official utterances and the arguments of the semi-official papers, however, was sufficient evidence to them of the real policy of the Emperor, although they did not know all that was going on behind the scenes. For at this very time the Emperor was intriguing to secure the support of England in breaking the blockade, and on April 11, accorded an interview with Lindsay with that end in view.

At the same time there was considerable speculation about a mysterious visit of Mercier, the minister at Washington, to Richmond. The *Débats* refused to credit it with any political significance,¹⁵ but nevertheless its close interest

¹² Corps Législatif, Mar. 13, 1862.

¹³ *Siècle*, Mar. 3, 1862, Émile de la Bédollière.

¹⁴ *Journal des Débats*, Apr. 29, 1862, L. Allourey.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, May 6, 1862, J.-J. Weiss.

was evidence of some nervousness. Slidell was much puzzled about the matter and sought an explanation from Thouvenel, who knew nothing about it except what had been told him by Lord Russell, who had learned from Lord Lyons that Mercier had gone to Richmond at the instance of Seward, who had authorized him to say that if the South would return to the Union, any and every condition which it could demand would be accorded; and that when Mercier arrived at Richmond he met with so peremptory a denial to entertain such a proposition on any terms that he had not even an opportunity to give Mr. Seward's view in detail. Slidell concluded from the fact that the Department of Foreign Affairs had not received a report of this from Mercier that there must be a private correspondence between Mercier and the Emperor, a thing that he had suspected before.¹⁶ Benjamin's statement of the affair was that Mercier had come to him in a purely personal capacity, with Seward's knowledge and consent, but he did not say that Seward had asked him to come; that they had conversed in a friendly way; that Mercier had said he believed the solution lay in political independence and commercial union; and that it would please him personally as well as his government, if his good offices could be interposed in a way to restore peace.¹⁷ But whatever the real facts about Mercier's visit were, to the public it remained an unsolved mystery.

The papers continued to maneuver for better positions, each side making use of every incident that would advance its contentions. Upon the taking of New Orleans, it was reported that a French officer had been sent by the Federals under flag of truce to arrange for the protection of Frenchmen in case of bombardment, but the Confederates had confined him in Fort Jackson. The *Débats* asked if this was not a violation of international law at least as clear as that with which the North had been so much reproached in the Trent affair.¹⁸ It was reported also that the stock of New Or-

¹⁶ Slidell to Benjamin, No. 7, May 9, 1862; No. 9, May 15, 1862.

¹⁷ Benjamin to Slidell, No. 5, July 19, 1862.

¹⁸ *Journal des Débats*, May 15, 1862, J.-J. Weiss.

leans cotton, 18,000 bales, had been burned by the Confederates under martial law before retiring. It was an excellent opening for the *Débats*. "We possess in France, journals which each day excite the suffering populace of Europe against the North, by trying to throw upon it the responsibility for the enforced idleness. Workmen of Lancashire and Lyons, if you are out of work, you will know from now on to whom you owe it; you will know on which side are the burners of cotton!"¹⁹ When President Lincoln annulled the proclamation of General Hunter freeing the slaves of Florida, Georgia and South Carolina, this paper saw in it the good sense, moderation, tact and political sagacity of Lincoln. He had only reserved to himself the right to give judgment upon a question of competence and constitutionality, while his appeal to the slaveholders to open their eyes to the signs of the times, was looked upon as a warning that he would not hesitate to determine the question in the same way on the day, which he evidently thought was approaching, when all other chances being exhausted, he would consider it his duty to have recourse to the exercise of that extraordinary and rigorous power that for the present he did not exercise.²⁰ As evidence of Southern brutality, the *Siècle* reproduced Farragut's letter to the Mayor of New Orleans in which the Confederates are reproached for firing upon helpless women and children for giving expression to their pleasure at seeing the old flag.²¹ All these things were ammunition for Liberal gunners.

In May, the journal *Union* came out in favor of a mediation on the basis of separation and abolition of slavery. The *Siècle* thought this proposition was worthy of attention, though it preferred mediation on the basis of union with abolition. The argument of the *Union* to the effect that a State of the United States could break the Federal bond when it chose, said the Republican paper, would have astonished Washington and the other founders of the American re-

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, May 15, 1862, J.-J. Weiss.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, June 1, 1862, L. Alloury.

²¹ *Siècle*, May 18, 1862, Émile de la Bédollière.

public very much. "It is only necessary to read carefully that constitution drawn up by those great minds to be convinced that it is conceived in a way to make as indissoluble as possible the union between the different parts of the confederation. The constitution of the United States is distinguished from other federative constitutions by the care which it takes to strengthen the central power." It was compared in this respect with the Swiss and German confederations where the states executed the laws of the central government. "The right of the Federal government to maintain the Union is certain in our eyes." Neither did the *Siècle* see in Lincoln a dictator, as did the Union, and had no fear for "the duration of the glorious institutions of democratic and free America." At any rate, while it could not say what would be thought of it in the United States, the *Siècle* asserted that "in France, an attempt at mediation upon the bases proposed by the Union, that is to say, frankly anti-slavery, would be favorably received by public opinion."²²

There now began a campaign in France on the part of the supporters of the South in favor of some form of interference in America, a campaign that continued almost unabated through the year.

On May 8, the *Constitutionnel*, leader of the Imperialist forces, came out with a strong article attacking the policy of the *Journal des Débats*, which was to allow the war to continue in America in the hope that in time Congress would be forced to proclaim the abolition of slavery. This meant war to the extent of the extermination of the whites in order to exterminate slavery. "Our policy," it said, "as for us, takes care not to defend the institution of slavery, but in seeking for means to bring about the disappearance of this odious institution, without creating revolutions and without piling up ruins, it concerns itself at the same time with the fate of French industry, and the negroes of the Carolinas do not make it forget the workmen of Lyons and

²² Ibid., May 5, 1862, Taxile Delord.

Roubaix. The policy of the Constitutionnel, therefore, may be summed up in two words: Conciliation, Mediation." "Is cotton the only object which concerns us? Do not our wines, our brandy, our millinery, our furniture, our worsteds, our mixed goods, and especially our silks, form the principal part of our exportation to America? And has not our export commerce almost entirely been destroyed by the American civil war? Is there any other cause for the continued unemployment at Lyons, at Saint-Étienne, and at Tarrare?"²³ Having thus elaborated upon the sufferings of France, which only peace could relieve, the Constitutionnel needed to complete the argument to show that there could be no peace of victory for the North. The capture of New Orleans afforded reflections leading to that conclusion. This, it said, was a great victory for the North, but it meant nothing in such a large country. The South was now fighting for its firesides and could not be defeated. The North was fighting for supremacy, the South for independence. The Union could not be reestablished with cannon balls, all the more impossible in view of the ferment of repulsion, hatred, vengeance, that intestine wars carry with them. It was a question of the submission of six million souls. "We are inspired by that sage and generous policy which, from the beginning of the war, had offered its mediation; we have never desired that, under the pretext of giving liberty to four million negroes, there should be brought about the subjection of six million whites. Certainly, like our adversaries, at least as much as they, we aspire to the emancipation of the slaves, but we desire that emancipation by the progress of ideas and the conciliation of interests, not by ruin and massacre!"²⁴ The burning of the cotton at New Orleans (here given as 11,700 bales) which the Débats had interpreted so unfavorably to the South, the Constitutionnel merely regarded as an evidence

²³ Constitutionnel, May 8, 1862, Paulin Limayrac. This is No. 3 of a series entitled, "The American War."

²⁴ Ibid., May 22, 1862, Paulin Limayrac.

of the determination of the South. "Can one remain impassive before such sorrowful facts?"²⁵ The opposition press were able to observe the increased activity of the government organs and the trend of these observations of the chief of the semi-official papers. They were willing to lament with the Imperialist editor over the shedding of blood, and to join with him in humanitarian ideas, but, as said the *Siècle*, "we are disturbed at the adhesion that he seems to give to separation. There are, moreover, in that polemic [of May 22] of the *Constitutionnel*, clouds, the mysteries of which it would be difficult to penetrate."²⁶ The *Constitutionnel* was forced to defend itself against the charges of the *Presse*, the *Siècle*, and the *Débats* that it was defending the cause of slavery.²⁷

By June, the question of mediation had reached an acute state, which was not passed until October 23, when the English cabinet meeting which was to consider the American question was not held. It was during these five months that the friends of America in France fought their great fight for the preservation of the American Union with which they identified principles of universal and permanent consideration, the abolition of human servitude and democratic ideals. Their task was rendered more difficult by the fact that their government was intriguing in secret. It was in July that Napoleon had his interview with Slidell at Vichy, in which Slidell favored common action with the Confederacy against the North, an enemy of France as well as of the Confederacy in view of its opposition to Napoleon's schemes of conquest in Mexico.

In early June the two leading papers joined issues. On June 8, the *Constitutionnel* summed up its position. There was no chance for Southern submission. The war would not be brought to an end by the action of either of the two parties. Peace could only come from outside, and the word

²⁵ *Ibid.*, May 25, 1862, A. Grenier.

²⁶ *Siècle*, May 23, 1862, Émile de la Bédollière.

²⁷ *Constitutionnel*, May 24, 1862, P. de Troimonts.

that could solve the question was Mediation. It had answered already the question as to whence that mediation should come; the bases for mediation were easy to discover. Mediation should represent only ideas of moderation and justice and not be addressed either to those who desired a servile war or to those who regarded slavery as an institution of divine right. Such mediation would correspond with the vital industrial interests of Europe and also with Lincoln's recent reference to the resolution adopted by strong majorities in Congress approving cooperation with such State as adopted gradual emancipation by compensating it for public and private losses resulting from the change, and should be in accordance with Lincoln's address of March 4, 1861, in which he said that it was not his intention to interfere with slavery in the States where it already existed. Such mediation should also consider Yancey's address in Fishmonger's Hall, on November 9, last, in which he said that the South would insist upon independence but in the interest of peace and humanity would make concessions on points of secondary importance.²⁸

Here was a definite program, and the *Journal des Débats* answered on the following day:

Assuredly, if the North and South were disposed to act together and submit their difference to the arbitration of France or of any other European power whatever, far from turning away from it we should be the first to felicitate them in their own interest as well as in the general interest of Europe. But in the present state of things, is there any reason to hope that such an accord could be possible between the two parties? The *Constitutionnel* forgets to explain itself upon that point, which for us is the principal point. That journal will remember that a year ago, at the beginning of the war, France offered its mediation to America, and that that mediation was not accepted. Now, after a year, events have advanced; the situation of the belligerents has profoundly changed. After this, what chance is there that the offer of mediation, refused a year back, would be accepted today, by either of the two parties, and especially by the one which can find in its military success reasons which it did not then have, to hope to see the fortunes of war end the struggle and solve the question to its advantage? ²⁹

²⁸ *Ibid.*, June 8, 1862, Paulin Limayrac.

²⁹ *Journal des Débats*, June 9, 1862, L. Alloury. The mediation of the year before, evidently referred to, had been intended to be a joint one of France and Great Britain. When, on Apr. 15, 1861,

The reply of the *Constitutionnel* was to point to the growing deficit in the United States treasury, and the lack of progress made by the North toward overcoming the South.³⁰

Thus the liberal paper was challenged to show the accomplishments of the defenders of the Union. Its reply was characteristically that of a liberal, for it dwelt not upon the military situation, but upon the progress of humanitarian ideals. The *Constitutionnel*, it said, had forgotten the recent capture of New Orleans; that the Federals were in control of the Mississippi and had encamped within three leagues of Richmond. Moreover, a law had been passed abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, there was a law inviting the South to free its slaves in consideration of an indemnity, there was a treaty with England, which, loyally applied, would soon render the slave trade almost impossible, there was a President who did not resemble Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Davis, and who had the captains of negro ships executed in the public square instead of putting them at liberty with a fine, there was a law prohibiting the introduction of slavery in the territories where slavery did not yet exist. There was, moreover, in America, a new code of liberty. That code did not contain any harsh measure, it did not decree the violent abolition of slavery, it proposed it gradually and with indemnity. "If the North wanted to annul the laws that we have just enumerated, it would raise against itself the opinion of the whole civilized world; if the South desires to accept them reconciliation is possible, and for that condition we fervently pray."³¹ The other Imperialist papers lined up behind the *Constitutionnel*, and the Liberal press came to the support of the *Débats*. The *Presse* feared that England would seek in fruitless negotiations a pretext to recognize the South.³² A mediation, it said,

the ministers of those two countries presented themselves together, Seward refused to see them in that manner. When they presented their notes separately Seward courteously declined the offered mediation (F. W. Seward, "Life of Seward," vol. ii, "Seward at Washington," pp. 581-582).

³⁰ *Constitutionnel*, June 11, 1862, Paulin Limayrac.

³¹ *Journal des Débats*, June 12, 1862, L. Alloury.

³² *Presse*, June 13, 1862, Élias Regnault.

is only proposed between two belligerent states recognized as such. What would the Convention have said if it had been presented with a mediation between it and the Vendée? What would France say today if Alsace should rise in rebellion and were supported by a demand from Germany for mediation? It feared that in case of a refusal of mediation, even if it were not followed by an armed intervention, it might be followed by the recognition of the South, and such action, far from bringing the war to a close, would only add fuel to the fires. If followed by armed intervention, a series of complications would be entered into, of which one could not see either the extent or the duration.³³ The question of what would be done if the mediation should fail had already been raised by the *Débats*. The *Times* had appeared to admit that a failure of the mediation would lead to recognition of the South. In other words the mediation was only a first step toward intervention in American affairs. The *Constitutionnel* and the *Patrie* were called upon to explain their purposes in the matter.³⁴

The *Débats* explained that if the proposed mediation was intended simply to bring the two parties together with the purpose of arresting the spilling of blood, to agree upon an arbitration to be accepted freely by both parties, that it would not be behind in rejoicing in the interest of civilization and humanity, but before giving its approval it was deemed essential to know in what spirit it was conceived and what the consequences might be. It must know if the project of mediation did not have for its aim to favor one of the two parties at the expense of the other. "If the mediation were to be imposed by force upon that of the two parties which could refuse it, if it were to lead to an armed intervention in American affairs, an intervention in favor of the South, which represents for us the cause of slavery, an intervention against the North, which represents a great principle of civilization and humanity, if it is thus that

³³ *Ibid.*, June 15, 1862, Élias Regnault.

³⁴ *Journal des Débats*, June 14, 1862, Louis Alloury.

the mediation is intended, as the language of the *Constitutionnel* would make us fear, we should be consistent in opposing mediation with all our power." And it was pointed out that this policy was in accord with that of the Emperor and of Mr. Billault, in the addresses above referred to.³⁵

Meantime the famous order of General Butler in New Orleans was being put to use by the Imperialist press. After denouncing this measure, the *Constitutionnel* added: "The fate of New Orleans is the fate of all the cities which are occupied by the armies of the North, and each Federal chief hastens to regulate his conduct by the example of the famous Butler."³⁶ The *Moniteur* felt called upon to refer to the debates in the House of Commons on this order and the characterization of Palmerston that it was infamous, and the official paper added that these sentiments would be shared not only by the English people but by all civilized peoples.³⁷ The *Débats* interpreted this order to mean that "women well born, who insult the Federal flag or the Federal soldiers in the street, will be sent to prison as if they were only unknown women." "But what European general, supposing him as respectful toward women as a gentleman should be, what European general would submit, in a captured city, in open war and under military law, for his flag and uniform to be insulted with impunity, even by women?"³⁸ The *Constitutionnel* was much exercised over the execution of Mr. Mumford who had overturned a Federal flag, and complained that the papers were mute upon this matter, and it expected tomorrow to "read in some journal, which believes itself liberal, that the woman of New Orleans who was treated as a prostitute, had merited those infamous insults, since she had thrown a look of scorn at the soldiers of Butler, and that Mr. Mumford deserved to be hanged, as the worst of criminals, since he had over-

³⁵ *Ibid.*, June 15, 1862, Louis Alloury.

³⁶ *Constitutionnel*, June 12, 1862, A. Grenier.

³⁷ *Moniteur*, June 16, 1862.

³⁸ *Journal des Débats*, June 16, 1862, J.-J. Weiss.

thrown the flag of the oppressors of his country.”³⁹ Such arguments as this were well calculated to win the sympathy of the French people for the South, and to secure popular support in the projects of mediation. It even was argued that mediation was the sole means of ending the war and the best guarantee of the abolition of slavery.⁴⁰

After the Confederate successes before Richmond, the government paper showed its hand. In a long article, headed “The American War, The Latest Events,” of July 19, it was asked what would happen if the party of extermination at any price got the uppermost and if the principles of political reason and humanity were stifled? Could Europe, which was suffering so profoundly from it, remain for a long time a spectator of that frightful war? Europe would be lacking in its duties toward itself, and justice to others, if it should, for it was no longer permissible to consider as insurgents and rebels, populations which for over a year had fought for their independence, and which had proved by the most irrefutable evidences that they were a government and a nation. Europe did not wait so long to recognize the revolution of 1830, to recognize Belgium. The kingdom of Italy already had been recognized for a year by France and England and had just been recognized by Russia and Prussia. “The situation commands and the solemn moment approaches. Let us hope that the North will listen at last to the voice of reason and justice, and that it will accept a European mediation before Europe has recognized the Confederate States.”⁴¹

As a matter of fact the French government was at this time acting in concert with Mr. Lindsay, who in the House of Commons was pushing a resolution in favor of mediation. Liberals believed this meant the use of force, and they wanted to know if the proposals of the *Constitutionnel* had that meaning.⁴² The *Constitutionnel* asserted that the pol-

³⁹ *Constitutionnel*, July 7, 1862, Auguste Vitu.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, June 20, 1862, Paulin Limayrac.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, July 19, 1862, Paulin Limayrac.

⁴² *Journal des Débats*, July 20, 1862, Louis Alloury. Charivari said

icy of the *Débats* could be summed up in one word, "Extermination," while that of the *Constitutionnel* was "Conciliation."⁴³ Lord Palmerston refused to support Lindsay's resolution. The *Revue Contemporaine*, after expressing its disappointment at this, added that the war had changed its purpose; the North was not fighting to overthrow slavery, but was using abolition merely as a weapon of war; the South was not fighting for slavery, for it realized perfectly that whatever the outcome of the war might be, a mortal blow would be given to the institution. It was merely fighting for autonomy, and to this it had as much right as Greece had for emancipation from the Turks, Belgium to separate from Holland, Venetia and Hungary to separate from Austria, or Poland to rid itself of the Russian governors.⁴⁴ The *Presse* saw in Palmerston's attitude toward the Lindsay resolution a repudiation of the policy of the Imperialist journals, and added that while it was certain that the three government journals (*Constitutionnel*, *Patrie* and *Pays*) did not represent on this occasion the opinions of the French government, nevertheless it was very singular to see them united so cordially in their apology for the insurrection in the United States.⁴⁵

The Liberals saw clearly that the mediation proposals meant more than they said on their face. The *Siècle* insisted that it could not be believed for a single instant that the cabinet at Washington, which was increasing its efforts to maintain the Union, would listen to an offer of mediation. If mediation were refused, the powers would be pushed into hostile demonstrations and a rupture with America.⁴⁶ The *Presse* did not see how the United States could be

that before recognizing the Confederacy the cabinets of Europe must know its address. Where could they write with Richmond, Charleston and New Orleans controlled by the Federals? (Charivari, July 23, 1862, Clément Caraguel).

⁴³ *Constitutionnel*, July 22, 1862, Paulin Limayrac.

⁴⁴ *Revue Contemporaine*, vol. lxiii, p. 423, July 31, 1862, J.-E. Horn.

⁴⁵ *Presse*, July 22, 1862, Ad. Gaiffe.

⁴⁶ *Siècle*, July 27, 1862, Émile de la Bédollière; see also *Revue Germanique*, vol. xxii, p. 460, Aug. 1, 1862, Eugène Maron.

forced. "Where are the fleets, the armies, that would be needed to be brought together for such a task?" "To overthrow the resistance of the Mexican government we are forced to send a veritable army, twenty-five thousand men, to spend considerable sums. Compare Juarez with Lincoln, Zarragoza with McClellan, the three or four armies which have invaded the South with the handful of bachibozouks who skirmish around Orizaba, then count the cost of the military intervention of which the organs of the semi-official press speak so lightly." It was suggested that the services of the defenders of secession might be given to the rebels in China—and the Tai-pings did not keep negroes.⁴⁷ A proclamation of the Mayor of New York, calling for the services of all loyal men, not only to repress the Southern insurrection, but to prevent a foreign intervention, was offered in evidence of the effect of the agitation of Lindsay and the policy of the Constitutionnel in wounding national pride and increasing the irritation of the people of the United States.⁴⁸

The Débats admitted that it was not opposed to mediation in principle, but passing from theory to practice, it was very clearly established, on the one hand, that recognition of the South could not have, at present, the result hoped for from it, at least if it were not followed by a direct and active intervention; on the other hand, that a direct and active intervention, instead of ending the war and ameliorating the situation from which Europe was suffering, would only lead to greater evils, and more suffering and greater harm for the intervening powers. "What would have happened if the insurrection of the South had been frankly disavowed and condemned by all the European press? Who would dare to say that before that unanimous reprobation of the civilized world, the South would have dared to raise the flag of secession? In any case, who could deny that the North would have found in the moral accord and in the general sympathy of Europe, sufficient force to conquer

⁴⁷ Presse, July 26, 1862, E.-D. Forgus.

⁴⁸ Journal des Débats, July 22, 1862, L. Alloury.

the rebellion and terminate promptly the civil war?"⁴⁹ The journals that advocated European interference in American affairs were given the blame for the reported digging up of the tobacco and cultivated cotton and the failure to sow their fields, on the part of the secessionists, who hoped thus to exasperate the European interests affected into intervention.⁵⁰ The *Siècle* admitted that from a strictly legal point of view France might aid either the North or the South, but from the moral point of view it should not aid the cause of slavery which was represented by the South. Moreover, recognition would not end the war; neither would declaring the blockade ineffectual, for that would mean war, and French industries would suffer a hundred times more than at present, and imposts, now weighing so heavily on the tax-payers, would grow by a half or perhaps would double. Interest and honor, French principles and traditions, called for an alliance with the North rather than recognition of the South. An effective alliance with the North would soon end the war. "But we do not dare to hope for such an event."⁵¹

The Liberals continued from all sides to demand of the *Constitutionnel* what it would do if mediation were refused. Finally, on August 2, it answered the question so many times repeated: "No, a hundred times, No; mediation refused would not lead to war. We have always understood that the mediating action of the great powers could only be friendly; but if the hypothesis of the *Journal des Débats* should unfortunately be realized, what would happen? America, after all, would only give a new proof of blindness; it would only dishearten its friends more and more." But Europe would have to be called in at some time anyway to arbitrate the various delicate questions that would have to be settled, such as the navigation of the Mississippi and the delimitation of boundaries. It was only to hasten that

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, July 27, 1862, L. Alloury.

⁵⁰ *Siècle*, Aug. 15, 1862, Taxile Delord.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Aug. 27, 1862, T.-N. Benard.

inevitable arbitration, and avert the catastrophes that agitated America, that the Constitutionnel desired.⁵²

Lincoln's preliminary emancipation proclamation was received with favor by the Liberal press, although it was not complete enough to give entire satisfaction. It was taken as a refutation of the arguments of those who had insisted that slavery had nothing to do with the war.⁵³ Lincoln had not abolished slavery completely, an act which "would have been nobler and more decisive, which would perhaps have terminated the civil war by a single blow," but he had made a new step toward abolition. It was evident that he was being drawn day by day into more radical measures.⁵⁴ The *Presse* was frankly unsatisfied. It recognized that the president was placed between "the abolitionists, who do not want to compromise, and the despisers of the blacks, who oppose any idea of equality," and doubtless he could not adopt any measure other than a compromise. "Unfortunately, half-measures satisfy nobody."⁵⁵ In a circular note to the diplomatic and consular agents of the United States, Seward had pointed out that the proclamation was only a war measure. "That gives small satisfaction to those who would have preferred to see in it a moral act. In place of a principle, it is only a bomb thrown into the midst of the population of the South, and assuredly is but little suited to reclaim the heart and convince the conscience."⁵⁶ The Imperialists of course had no good to say of the measure. "The proclamation of Mr. Abraham Lincoln, which we have already mentioned and which we publish today in its entirety, does not do honor to the moral sense of the one who signed it or to the government which approved it." If a fervent abolitionist had proclaimed the absolute suppression of slavery, it might have been looked upon as a humanitarian measure. But in this proclamation Lincoln does not condemn slavery in prin-

⁵² Constitutionnel, Aug. 2, 1862, Paulin Limayrac.

⁵³ Journal des Débats, Oct. 9, 1862, J.-J. Weiss.

⁵⁴ Siècle, Oct. 12, 1862, Léon Plée.

⁵⁵ Presse, Oct. 8, 1862, Élias Regnault.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Oct. 15, 1862, Élias Regnault.

ciple: "Far from condemning slavery, he promises to maintain it; he offers a premium to encourage it in favor of states which from now until the first of January next, reenter the Union, so that if the proclamation could attain the end that it proposes, and if, supposing the impossible, all the Confederate states laid down their arms within the next three months, slavery would be in fact and by right maintained in all the territories." "Who then will dare to say again that the North fights for the suppression of slavery?"⁵⁷ The *Revue Contemporaine* thought that in principle the proclamation seemed to accord to the loyal States the maintenance of slavery, and simply offered emancipation in those places where the United States was incapable of making it a reality.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ *Constitutionnel*, Oct. 8, 1862, Auguste Vitu.

⁵⁸ *Revue Contemporaine*, vol. lxxv, pp. 913-914, Dec. 31, 1862, J.-E. Horn.

CHAPTER V

THE ARMISTICE PROPOSAL AND THE QUESTION OF RECOGNITION

Looking back on events at the present time it is clear that after October 23, 1862, the crisis had passed, for the cabinet meeting that had been determined upon for that day at which it had been intended to discuss the British policy toward the South was not in fact held.¹ But to the people of that time, intervention of some sort seemed imminent. In fact it was in November that Napoleon made his most serious attempt to secure European interference in American affairs, all the more dangerous because it appeared in the insidious form of pure humanitarianism. On November 10, there was presented at the British Foreign Office a proposal, dated back to October 10, looking toward united efforts on the part of England, Russia and France to bring about an armistice of six months while peace negotiations were being carried on.² A similar note was sent to St. Petersburg. The semi-official papers of both England and France had wind of it some days before it was presented. The proposal found favor, of course, with the Imperialist press, which hoped that reason and humanity would prevail over passion, and believed that it would lead to "a durable and serious settlement."³

The Liberal press was not entirely agreed on this matter. The *Presse* believed that the first effect of an armistice would be to reassure the slave owners, and permit them to

¹ Rhodes, vol. iv, p. 343, and Charles Francis Adams, "The Crisis of Foreign Intervention in the War of Secession, September-November, 1862" (Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings, Apr., 1914, vol. xlvii, pp. 372-424), for references.

² Parl. Debates, vol. clxxii, July 2, 1863. Layard's statement in the House of Commons. The note appeared in the *Moniteur*, Nov. 13, 1862.

³ *Constitutionnel*, Nov. 10, 1862, A. Grenier.

make cruel reprisals upon their revolted and fugitive negroes. "It is true that we would get cotton, but at what price? Just as the slave question was about to be solved, it would be thrown back indefinitely. . . . If peace were now made, it would be made upon the backs of the negroes."⁴ The *Journal des Débats* had no idea that the proposal would be accepted by the North. "It remains for us to know by what arguments it is hoped to convince the North. The armistice, if it should lead at the end of six months to a resumption of hostilities, would have turned to the single advantage of the South. It is proposed in reality, as the *Patrie* says, to demand preliminarily of the North that the blockade be removed from the ports of the South. They will not remain open six months without the South, the resources of which are exhausted, providing itself with money, munitions and perhaps European recruits, so that if the war should be taken up again, the North, in the hypothesis of an armistice, would have suspended hostilities only to furnish means to the enemy to permit it to revictual in full security. That is a kind of contract which has not much in it to tempt the North."⁵ The *Siècle*, however, which all along had favored some form of friendly mediation, said that while it was opposed to a mediation which would be an implicit recognition of the South, it believed that the armistice proposal might be so prepared as to avoid the objections seen by the *Journal des Débats*.⁶ The *Constitutionnel* continued its appeal for the end of a frightful conflict, and the relief of the industry and commerce of Europe.⁷

Up to this time, the reports of the Emperor's proposal had not been official. On November 13, it was published officially in the *Moniteur*, and was the occasion for a new flood of comment. The *Constitutionnel* pronounced the initiative for that proposition "a title of honor" for the Im-

⁴ *Presse*, Nov. 11, 1862, Ad. Gaiffe.

⁵ *Journal des Débats*, Nov. 11, 1862, J.-J. Weiss.

⁶ *Siècle*, Nov. 12, 1862, Émile de la Bédollière.

⁷ *Constitutionnel*, Nov. 12, 1862, Paulin Limayrac.

perial government "of which it should be felicitated, even if its efforts should remain without immediate results." It was a new evidence of "that policy of disinterestedness and conciliation that France carries beyond the Atlantic as she desires to make it triumph in Europe."⁸

The Débats had no such favorable comment:

The language is skilful, and not a word goes beyond the rights that the constant usages of civilized nations confer upon neutrals, when in a matter of the interest of humanity they propose to offer themselves as arbiters in a bloody quarrel. But all the skill, all the prudence, all the good intentions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs do not succeed in dissimulating the almost insurmountable difficulties which would present themselves when, leaving general considerations aside, one desires to discuss the practical conditions of the armistice. What would be done with the blockade? If the blockade were maintained while the war was suspended upon the continent, it is the South that one would disarm. If the blockade were raised during those six months, it is the North which would open to the exhausted South, new sources of abundance and vigor. Thus, one or the other party would have right to object that the proposed armistice was to its detriment. However, we do not discuss that eventuality. The insertion of the dispatch of Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys in the *Moniteur*, when one compares the text of that document with the dispatches which arrived yesterday from England and Russia, would appear to us rather to have been done to explain the conduct of the French government than to prepare the public for an approaching mediation. England hesitates to attempt a step which might lead it farther than it would like, and up to the present the Russian government has only spoken by the organ of the *St. Petersburg Journal* which has pronounced itself against intervention. Not having (at least according to the rumors which run at London) succeeded in having its plan accepted as quickly as it would have liked, the Imperial government could not better exonerate itself from the suspicion of partiality against the North than in publishing an official piece where, while admitting the designation, still extra-official, of "Confederate States," it bases its reasons for action on the old friendship of France for the United States, and protests highly that its good offices could not induce it to cease to be neutral. Since a rigorous impartiality is the first duty that it imposes upon itself in that distressful affair, the imperial government will not have to regret having fallen in an overture at conciliation which might have insensibly entrained our diplomacy in a way where it would have been difficult to always keep exact balance between the North and the South, and where the equilibrium, if it should have had to be broken, would not have been (at least one so fears) in favor of that of the two causes which is the most just, the most popular and the most French.⁹

In another article, it is admitted that the language of the

⁸ Ibid., Nov. 14, 1862, Edouard Simon.

⁹ *Journal des Débats*, Nov. 14, 1862, J.-J. Weiss.

minister of foreign affairs does not depart from a rigorous impartiality, but it is added that "it is impossible, in so grave a matter, to be contented with words, and it is necessary to go right to the base of things. . . . The South has never aspired or demanded anything other than the suspension of hostilities and the raising of the blockade; and in fact, after such a measure, a treaty of peace is no more than a formality that it could expect," and for the North to accept that proposition is "simply to recognize in fact the existence of the Southern Confederation and the definitive dismemberment of the republic. . . . They propose to the North to accept willingly from this day what one might offer it as the preliminaries of peace after a war in which Europe in union with the South should have definitely won the victory." There was, therefore, left the dilemma, either of withdrawing while reporting the refusal of the proposition that was to be expected, or "it is determined in advance to impose by force the mediation that has been amicably offered. That is war with the North. . . ." It was remarked that the United States were no more bound before God and man to furnish cotton to France, than France, torn by civil war in 1792, was bound to furnish its ordinary contingent of wines and silks. It evidently was intended as a threat to those who desired intervention, when the *Débats* pointed out that this might have results entirely different from those expected: "Perhaps it is necessary that a foreign flag should float before New Orleans beside the slave flag for the farmer of the West to feel at last that the mouths of that great river are part of his magnificent heritage and that his country includes them. . . . But we should see without too much inquietude that supreme test begin and a foreign hand draw near to the United States, certain as we are that that will not be the hand of France, and that we shall be faithful to the interests as to the traditions of our country, praying for their victory."¹⁰

Even the *Siècle* which had leaned toward the proposal,

¹⁰ Ibid., Nov. 14, 1862, Prévost-Paradol.

placed itself in opposition when it saw that a suspension of the blockade was intended. This paper believed that those who thought that the United States would accept such a proposal were counting upon the success of the Democratic party in the coming elections, and it replied that even if the Democrats were successful, they would not admit any proposal which would affect the existence of the Union. Moreover, the argument in the circular that there was an equilibrium of forces in America would not dispose the North to be friendly toward the proposal, and "impartial people could not accept" that statement "without an extreme reserve."¹¹ It was asked whether France would have accepted such a proposal when it was torn by the revolt of the Vendée. Moreover, it was pointed out that France had in Mexico, thirty or forty thousand men, very near to the South which would profit the most from the armistice. It could not have escaped the other powers that if they should support the French proposition they would be making themselves a pedestal for France, and would be lending their aid to make France purely and simply the arbiter of America. No doubt, England and Russia had seen this, and instead of lending themselves to it, they took the opportunity to isolate France. "Their circulars, marked with so much respect for the legal government of the United States, would be enough alone to show the joy that they feel, and it is that that distresses us."¹²

The *Revue des Deux Mondes* in a shrewd analysis, showed how intervention might come from the proposal. The offer of France could be made only to the United States, as the Confederates were not recognized, without the permission of the White House. The North might answer the proposal by saying that to accept the armistice it must withdraw the emancipation proclamation and lift the blockade, and ask corresponding concessions from the South. Then the mediator must either try to find equitable terms, in which case

¹¹ *Siècle*, Nov. 18, 1862, Taxile Delord.

¹² *Ibid.*, Nov. 19, 1862, Léon Plée.

it would become involved in the confusion of American affairs and soon to led to take sides, with the possible result of armed intervention; or, the mediator might refuse to find the terms, in which case the mediation would fail, and the mediator submitted to ridicule would accuse the Washington government of obstinacy and become more and more hostile to it.¹³

As a matter of fact, the Imperialist journals believed that the terms must include separation, and to avoid the disagreeable imputation of supporting slavery, they argued that separation would bring abolition quicker than union, for four or five million whites could not hold four and a half million blacks in slavery. The South needed the North to maintain slavery and the North had shown itself willing to give its aid if the Union could be reestablished.¹⁴

England refused to be drawn into the American complications, and politely refused Napoleon's proposal. The *Presse*, in an article remarkable for its open criticism of the government policy, said that England had seized with great skill the opportunity which Drouyn de Lhuys had afforded it to adjust its affairs with the United States. This act of England would allay the unfriendly feeling caused in the United States by its action in the Trent affair. "Thanks to the attempt of Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys, thanks to the evasive response made by Lord Russell, no such thing is more to be feared, and now the credit of England has retaken at Washington the ascendancy that various circumstances had lost for it." France had exchanged the friendship of the North for that of the South, but asked the *Presse*, was not the friendship of the North, which was fighting "for the maintenance of the legal order of things, for the defense of the Constitution and of the choice of universal suffrage, worth more than that of the South defending slavery?"¹⁵

¹³ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xlii, pp. 485-93, Nov. 15, 1862, E. Forcade.

¹⁴ *Revue Contemporaine*, vol. lxxv, pp. 220-4, Nov. 14, 1862, J.-E. Horn.

¹⁵ *Presse*, Nov. 16, 1862, Ad. Gaiffe.

The *Constitutionnel*, taking its cue from the *Morning Post*, endeavored to soften the diplomatic check by alleging that the action of England was due to the belief that the coming elections in America would bring about the fall of the Lincoln government, after which the proposed mediation would be more likely to succeed. On the basis of reported Democratic successes in New York and New Jersey, the *Constitutionnel* declared that the moment had now arrived.¹⁶

The journal, *Union*, continued even after the refusals of Great Britain and Russia, to favor diplomatic intervention in America,¹⁷ and the *Débats* found it necessary to reply to certain Parisian journals which accused it and the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of desiring the destruction of their fellow men in opposing mediation.¹⁸ The *Constitutionnel* continued to call for mediation on the ground that neither of the belligerents could sue for peace without a loss of dignity,¹⁹ dwelling upon the sufferings of the workmen of France and the "immense legions" out of work, "the victims of the most terrible crisis which has traversed the American continent and of which Europe has suffered the effect,"²⁰ while the *Débats* questioned if the constant menaces of intervention not followed by action had been advantageous—if the manufacturers would not have preferred a hundred times if it had been declared from the beginning of the struggle that it would be long and bloody, and that it was not a question of the tariff or a matter that could easily be terminated by a compromise, but a revolution directed by a powerful and proud caste. But the workmen were advised to accept their present distress as the work of Providence and to join with their patrons in an effort to make the best of things, following the advice of Bright to speak no word in favor of the monstrous creation now demanding admittance to the family of nations.²¹

¹⁶ *Constitutionnel*, Nov. 16, 1862, Paulin Limayrac.

¹⁷ *Journal des Débats*, Nov. 20, 1862, J.-J. Weiss.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Nov. 23, 1862, Prevost-Paradol.

¹⁹ *Constitutionnel*, Nov. 24, 1862, Paulin Limayrac.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Dec. 17, 1862, Paulin Limayrac.

²¹ *Journal des Débats*, Dec. 26, 1862, Auguste Léo.

This matter of slavery was the stumbling block in the way of the adherents of the South. Even such a paper as the *Presse* admitted that "in our eyes, a Constitution, however old or excellent it may be or may appear to be, is only an act. Before the *act*, the *principle*! Now, what is the principle to which the United States are indebted for the astonishing rapidity of their great development, for their immense strength, for their immense richness? No one disputes it: that principle is liberty. . . . From liberty proceeds logically *voluntary separation* between the South and the North. From the time that the South proposed it, demanded it, claimed it, the North was without title, without right, to refuse it." Neither could much validity be attached to Lincoln's argument in regard to the geographical unity of America. Nevertheless the North was justified in the war, and its justification lay in the question of slavery. "Loving liberty as we love it, desiring liberty as we desire it, have we need to say that we are opposed to slavery, and that all our sympathies are attached to the cause which the North represents?"²²

The annual messages of both Lincoln and Davis were followed closely in France. Lincoln's message of 1862 caused considerable comment. In expressing some disappointment at the attitude of European powers he had said that in the unusual agitation caused in foreign countries by the war, the United States had "forborne from taking part in any controversy between foreign states and between parties or factions in such states." The *Constitutionnel* replied that the Monroe doctrine, according to the interpretations of its commentators, demanded the hegemony of the United States over the whole of America, and that in the years previous to the Civil War there had been a school of politics in New York and Washington which dreamed of nothing less than to make the United States the arbiter in the affairs of Europe.²³ Liberals, however, were attracted by Lincoln's

²² *Presse*, Dec. 19, 1862, E. de Girardin.

²³ *Constitutionnel*, Dec. 18, 1862, Edouard Simon.

proposal for gradual and compensated emancipation. "Certain now of obtaining a proper indemnity for the liberation of its slaves, will the South return to its duty? We hope so, as do all the friends of civilization, but if the Union can not be reestablished in the name of right and justice, let it be reestablished by force!"²⁴ In an article headed, "The Isolation of the South," the *Siècle* said that after the message of President Lincoln, one could hardly be a partisan of the South, at least without breaking entirely with ideas of civilization.²⁵

The year 1863 opened with Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. The principles involved in this proclamation already had been discussed in connection with the preliminary proclamation of 1862. Its effects were belittled by the Imperialists. It was simply one more document for the archives of the White House. Its platonic effects were extended over three million one hundred thousand slaves, while hardly a million remained in "involuntary servitude." "Such, is the failure of Federal arms and the inefficacy of Presidential threats, which give such vast weight to the emancipation proclamation."²⁶ Even the Liberal friends of the Union were not satisfied by the measure. They were interested in emancipation from the humanitarian side, and there was considerable weight in the argument of the Imperialists that it was merely "a weapon of war, and not an act of generosity and justice."²⁷

Napoleon had failed in his effort to secure support in forcing an armistice upon America. To cover up his diplomatic defeat, it was necessary that he do something to show that he was interested only in humanity and the saving of bloodshed. So in a dispatch dated January 9, of this year, he made a proposal of friendly mediation which was officially published on

²⁴ *Siècle*, Dec. 18, 1862, Taxile Delord.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Dec. 22, 1862, Léon Plée.

²⁶ *Revue Contemporaine*, vol. lxxvi, pp. 438-9, Jan. 31, 1863, J.-E. Horn.

²⁷ *Constitutionnel*, Jan. 15, 1863, Edouard Simon.

January 28 and presented to Seward on February 3.²⁸ This was mediation, but mediation with the teeth pulled out; simply an offer of the good offices of France to end the struggle. On January 20, the *Constitutionnel*, preparing the way for the publication of this note, published an article in which the advantages were pointed out of a commission to discuss peace even while the war continued. "Some spirits have appeared to fear that the American people would see in a foreign interference, however amicable it might be, an act of a nature to wound its pride, and in an armistice an act of weakness. But could there not be other ways which might lead to a solution? At certain epochs in history during long and bloody wars, when the combatants, worn out with evils already suffered, hesitated before the responsibility of calamities to come, we have seen with the same step the work of peace go forward along with the work of war." Commissioners might be appointed who would give a decision. "The voice of those men invested with the confidence of their co-citizens evidently would have great authority. The states of the North and those of the South would thus come from it to a more calm appreciation of the causes of their differences. They would make reciprocal concessions and bring about that reconciliation so desired, which, while reassuring the interests of the world, would return the great American confederation to its civilizing mission and would restore to it in its integrity, that fine name of the United States, young still in history, and surrounded, nevertheless, with so much prestige."²⁹ Slidell's attention was attracted to this article, which was signed by the principal editor, by the fact that it gave "almost textually" the ideas and arguments on the subject of a conference which Persigny had presented to him three weeks before. He called on Persigny and found that the article had been published at the instance of the Minister of Foreign Affairs "who had favorably re-

²⁸ 37th Congress, 3d sess., S. Ex. Doc. No. 38, Dispatch No. 297, p. 13.

²⁹ *Constitutionnel*, Jan. 20, 1863, Paulin Limayrac.

ceived the suggestion of Mr. Persigny which had also been approved by the Emperor.”³⁰

When the mediation proposal was published, it met with the approval of all parties. The *Presse*, which had inclined toward friendly mediation all along, said that this offer secured the approbation of all Europe.³¹ It was interpreted by the *Débats* as a renunciation of the previous proposal of an armistice and as such it met with its approval. While it might not lead to peace, nevertheless it was “a great step indeed toward the respect of the right the North represents and toward that prudent and wholly French policy which is alarmed at mediation.”³² Comparing this proposal with the armistice proposal, it was said that “such an armistice proposed to the United States by the three great maritime powers of Europe resembled too nearly a summons to lay down their arms, and as that armistice called first of all for the raising of the blockade, it gave to the South powerful means of conquering its independence. Moreover, Europe must have decided in advance to impose that armistice by force or to make a perfectly useless overture, for it was quite clear that the United States would never accept of its own will, after having poured out torrents of blood to avoid it, an issue so fatal to its grandeur. The new proposition of France did not raise any such difficulty, and the friendliness of the form of that dispatch of January 9, was in accord with the harmlessness of the substance.”³³

The new proposal was rejected by Seward in a note which the *Revue des Deux Mondes* said lacked “the graces of diplomatic expression,” in which raillery took proportions not compatible with politeness, but it was hoped that the reply would cure “our Department of Foreign Affairs of its tastes for intervention in the American conflict.”³⁴

³⁰ Slidell to Benjamin, No. 24, Jan. 21, 1863.

³¹ *Presse*, Feb. 1, 1863, Eugène Chatard.

³² *Journal des Débats*, Jan. 30, 1863, J.-J. Weiss.

³³ *Ibid.*, Nov. 21, 1863, Prevost-Paradol.

³⁴ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xlv, p. 232, Mar. 1, 1863, E. Forcade.

Meantime the policies of the Emperor were being reviewed in the annual discussion of the Address to the Emperor in the two Chambers of the legislature. The Senate adopted a paragraph which read (paragraph 8) :

It would be desirable if the United States of America permitted us similar hopes. But the civil war there pursues its ravages, and the projects of conciliation of Your Majesty have appeared premature to the two great maritime powers of Europe. We regret it; it is always proper for diplomacy to offer with disinterestedness counsels of humanity. We regret it all the more because as a result of the disturbance that the secession has thrown in our commercial relations with America, stagnation of work has reached a distressing state in several manufacturing districts. . . .

No one spoke against this paragraph except the Marquis de Boissy, the Anglophobe, who charged that England had done more than consider the present time premature.³⁵ In the Corps Législatif there was a more lively session. The proposed paragraph on America there read (paragraph 5) :

We are profoundly grieved at the prolongation of the struggle in the United States and at the character that it has taken. Our sentiments of humanity are more affected by it than our interests. We regret that your friendly and disinterested voice has not been listened to by the great powers, and we pray that the Americans themselves will recoil soon before the evils that they are causing. We can not desire the exhaustion of a country which has known up to the present how to make use of liberty to the profit of labor and civilization.

An amendment was proposed by deputies Arman, Lefèvre, Lafond de Saint-Mür, de Montagnac and Cavet-Rogniat, which would have added to the second sentence, after the word "interests" : "which, however, could have found a real safeguard in a unanimous concert for the application, on the coasts of the Southern States, of the principles of maritime law solemnly proclaimed in the Treaty of Paris."

Arman, speaking in favor of this amendment, argued that the article of this treaty applying to blockades only stated a principle of maritime law, that this had been admitted by Marcy, and the blockade of the South evidently was not effective. It was replied, however, that the question of the

³⁵ Senate, Jan. 30, 1863.

validity of the blockade should be left with the government and this amendment was withdrawn.

The discussion then turned to the original paragraph, and the Viscount Anatole Lemerrier availed himself of the occasion to discuss the whole American question. He quoted Napoleon I to the effect that the original cession of Louisiana was made with the purpose of humbling the pride of England by the creation of a rival maritime power. Thus, France should not destroy Napoleon's work. He attempted to prove that slavery was at the bottom of the present dispute, and quoted from Stephens to that effect. "One might also oppose me with the latest act of President Lincoln which maintains slavery for his friends and gives liberty to the slaves of his adversaries. That is an inconsistency, moreover, that I deplore, but that does not prevent me from saying that I give the North credit for being, in principle, the partisan of the freedom of the blacks, while I blame the South for considering slavery a political institution." A peace now would be of short duration for the North would never consent that the Mississippi should be in the hands of a foreign power. Jefferson himself had said that there was one point on the globe of which the possessor was our natural and habitual enemy, and that was New Orleans. The conviction of this truth had had more effect in bringing the First Consul to sell Louisiana than had the eighty millions. Neither would the South keep a peace based on separation, for it would be flooded with abolitionist literature, and it would have to go to war with the North in order to preserve slavery. The only way to bring peace was for Europe to make it clear to the South that its separate existence would not be recognized. When the South realized the truth of this, peace would come. Then one could turn to the North and ask for concessions, loosening the bonds of the central government, making it similar to the Swiss or even the German confederation.³⁶ But the paragraph was adopted.

The argument that there would not be peace so long as

³⁶ Corps Législatif, Feb. 9, 1863.

the mouth of the Mississippi was in the hands of any power other than the States of the North and West who depended upon the Mississippi for their existence, was not a new one for France. It had been advanced in the *Débats* early in the war,³⁷ and it had been presented by the *Siècle* in January of this year. "Twenty million men belonging to one of the most industrious, tenacious and intrepid races which have appeared on the globe, peopling the valleys which extend from the Missouri and the Ohio to New York, carry on business and trade, enter and leave their homes only by way of the Mississippi and its numerous tributaries. Will it be possible to persuade those twenty million persons to leave the key of their house in the hands of the new republic . . . ?"³⁸ But Lemer cier's suggestion regarding concessions by the North was not so well received, at least by the *Presse*, which said that it was not in the power of the North to make concessions, for what the South wanted was separation, and the North must either accept that or refuse it.³⁹

The last serious effort in favor of the South was made in the English House of Commons when Mr. Roebuck brought up his resolution in favor of recognition. Before this resolution was brought up Roebuck made a visit to Fontainebleau, and it was reported in the newspapers that the Emperor had expressed himself as favorable to recognition of the South. The *Revue des Deux Mondes* professed not to believe such "strange rumors," and said that it was evident that the Emperor discussed questions pending between France and England only with the responsible ministers of the Queen of England, and not with a simple member of the House of Commons.⁴⁰ As a matter of fact this resolution of Roebuck's had no chance of success, for the ministry had made up its mind the October before and public opinion in England had since that time been going steadily against the

³⁷ See above, p. 18.

³⁸ *Siècle*, Jan. 31, 1863, Taxile Delord.

³⁹ *Presse*, Feb. 11, 1863, Émile de Girardin.

⁴⁰ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xivi, pp. 248-9, July 1, 1863, E. Forcade.

South.⁴¹ The attitude of the government of France, however, was quite another question. An especial importance belongs to the statement of the *Constitutionnel* as a semi-official paper, when, in answer to the question of what was the position of the government of France on that question, it expressed surprise that anyone should be in doubt as to France, which was the first to invite the great powers, England above all, to "seek a solution called for by humanity and the interest of the commerce of the whole world."⁴²

The *Débats* held that recognition by England would only stir up Northern hatred, and the party desiring peace would be overthrown by a patriotic wave. It was said that there would be no reason for surprise if "the zeal manifested among us by a certain press in favor of the South was not what contributed the most to render inactive the old hatred of England against the United States," although the assertion that the hatred of England was inactive was hardly justified by the facts. The Liberal paper believed that the Mexican expedition created an extremely serious state of things which was beginning to occupy the minds of the English. "That grave fact, of extreme importance to the general history of the world, of France disputing with the Anglo-Saxon race, the heritage of the Spanish republics in dissolution, can not fail to cause some anxiety on the part of England, despite the disinterested tone in which it exhorted us last year to conquer and colonize 'the yellow fever empire!'" It was suggested that if the South was to be recognized, and a war with the United States result, England would prefer that France do it, if it was to become a neighbor of the United States by the conquest of Mexico. The fact that Mexico was discussed in the English debates seemed to bear this suspicion out.⁴³

On the same day the *Constitutionnel* came out with an article which was clearly intended to state the case for recogni-

⁴¹ Rhodes, vol. iv, pp. 343-362.

⁴² *Constitutionnel*, July 2, 1863, Édouard Simon.

⁴³ *Journal des Débats*, July 3, 1863, J.-J. Weiss.

tion. The war was causing enormous sacrifices in men and money; hatred between the adversaries was growing more profound; and all this was due to the desire of the Federals to reestablish a Union that could not be reestablished. The history of the United States was reviewed to show that the original members of the Union would have refused to adhere to it if they had thought that the Constitution implied the surrender of their individual sovereignty; the United States was not a centralized state, but merely a federation of separate republics. Europe had patiently awaited the end of the war while its material interests were seriously affected, but it could not listen with indifference to the recital of those frightful butcheries in which were perishing so many thousands of men who were after all the sons of European nations. Could Europe remain indefinitely in the attitude of a distressed spectator? Did it not have duties to fulfill toward America as well as toward itself? Then the debates in the House of Commons were referred to and it was added that it was not necessary "to say with what satisfaction we should see the governments of Europe associate themselves in a thought of which the imperial government took the initiative and which was inspired as much by its old sympathies for the American nation as by its solicitude for the general interests of the world."⁴⁴

The *Débats* evidently feared that Roebuck's motion would pass and only strove to keep France from joining. When Roebuck said, "We shall be a much greater people, and London will be the imperial city of the world," the *Débats* pointed out that England might gain by the destruction of the maritime equilibrium, and a market for English industry would be opened where the bonds of customs, of language and of political interest would give them the advantage over France, while France had nothing to gain, but, by supporting England, would only cover with the French flag the establishment of a state exclusively based on slavery and declaring itself that slavery was its corner-stone.⁴⁵

When Roebuck reported to the Commons the famous in-

⁴⁴ *Constitutionnel*, July 3, 1863, H.-Marie Martin.

⁴⁵ *Journal des Débats*, July 5, 1863, Prévost-Paradol.

terview granted to himself and Lindsay by the Emperor of France,⁴⁶ the *Moniteur* gave another version of the matter, to the effect that when the members asked the Emperor to make an official proposal to England, he answered that England had turned down his proposal of October, but that nevertheless the ambassador at London had received instructions to sound upon that point the intentions of Palmerston and to give him to understand that if the English cabinet believed that the recognition of the South might put an end to the war, the Emperor would be disposed to follow.⁴⁷ The *Constitutionnel* commented on this to the effect that it was evidence that the Emperor had not sought to influence Parliament through two of its members but had only given explanations in an interview which he had no reason to refuse.⁴⁸ Whatever were the facts about the Roebuck interview, an official statement explaining it would not be of much value as to the real facts. Slidell reported that Roebuck and Lindsay "were authorized to state in the House of Commons that the Emperor was not only willing but anxious to recognise the Confederate States with the cooperation of England." He said that Mr. Lindsay would give Mr. Mason a written memorandum of the interview.⁴⁹ However, he had had an interview with Napoleon on June 18, in which the Emperor said that "he was more fully convinced than ever of the propriety" of recognizing the Confederacy, "but that the commerce of France and the success of the Mexican expedition would be jeopardised by a rupture with the United States." If, however, England would cooperate in recognition there need be no anticipation of war.⁵⁰ His real opinions on the subject of recognition had no doubt been made quite clear to the two Englishmen as well as to the Confederate representative. How far Napoleon would be willing to go alone was the serious question. Slidell himself had written in the spring that he believed Napoleon would

⁴⁶ Parl. Debates, vol. 171, June 30, 1863, Roebuck in the House of Commons.

⁴⁷ *Moniteur*, July 5, 1863.

⁴⁸ *Constitutionnel*, July 6, 1863, Édouard Simon.

⁴⁹ Slidell to Benjamin, No. 39, June 25, 1863 (*Pickett Papers*).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 38, June 21, 1863 (*Pickett Papers*).

have taken action separate from England on the question of the blockade had it not been for European complications; that, as a matter of fact, the France, "a journal enjoying in a high degree the confidence of the government," had commenced a series of articles dealing with the blockade at the inspiration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but they had been discontinued on a hint received from the same quarter. Slidell says that "the cause of this change was the prospect of difficulty with Prussia growing out of a convention said to have been entered into by that power with Russia for the suppression of the Polish insurrection."⁵¹ At any rate, it is clear from the diplomatic correspondence of Slidell as well as the arguments of the Imperialist press, that Napoleon was willing and anxious to act with England in favor of the South although he was not willing to act alone.

The summer of 1863 closed the serious attempts at interference in American affairs. That there had been no intervention was not due to any lack of zeal on the part of the Imperialist press. It can not even be said that the valiant defense of the Union by the Liberal press alone would have been sufficient to prevent action by Napoleon. The Mexican expedition was very unpopular, but it was carried on for a number of years. Public opinion in France had not the machinery to make itself felt as it did in England. It was the great change of opinion in England beginning at the end of 1862, that prevented foreign interference, and the cabinet meeting called for October 23, 1862, but not in fact held, was the turning point.

Even the £3,000,000 cotton loan, placed upon the markets of London, Paris, Frankfort, Amsterdam and Liverpool by the firm of Erlanger & Co., of Frankfort and Paris, and quickly subscribed despite the fears that the Confederacy would follow the example of certain Southern States in the way of repudiation, so declined that in April the Confederacy had to buy bonds back heavily in order to keep up the price.⁵²

⁵¹ Ibid., No. 28, Mar. 4, 1863 (Pickett Papers).

⁵² Ernest A. Smith, *The History of the Confederate Treasury*; *Constitutionnel*, Mar. 22, 1863, London correspondence, John Wilks; *Constitutionnel*, Mar. 23, 1863.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONFEDERATE PROPAGANDA

The Confederates had early recognized the need of influencing public opinion. In London, they published their own organ, the *Index*. In France, they made determined efforts to bring the people to the support of the Confederate cause.

In Slidell's first dispatch, he devotes most of his report to the state of the public mind. Wherever he had been he had found opinion favorable to the South, though the question of slavery, which he was to find later would be eternally arising, was causing some trouble:

It is true that you often hear expressed the regret that slavery exists amongst us, and the suggestion of a hope that some steps may be taken for its ultimate but gradual extinction, but, so far as my experience extends, this is never done in any offensive way, and the conversation is easily diverted to other and more agreeable topics. I make it a rule to enter into no discussion on the subject, for many of our best friends, who heartily advocate our cause, have theoretical views on the subject, which in general it is not worth while to combat. I should be inclined to think that the sentiment against slavery in the abstract is quite as wide-spread in France as it is in England, but that there is no considerable class of people here, who consider that its existence with us should control, or even modify, the policy of the nation in its relations with our Confederacy. I believe that the Emperor, the members of his Cabinet, and the higher functionaries of his government generally, are quite indifferent on the subject of slavery, and that the opposition to us professedly based on it, which is manifested by the so-called liberal journals, and those in the interest of the Orléans family is more dictated by a sentiment of opposition to the Emperor, than by any decided feeling of hostility to the institution.

He thought that the Republicans and Orleanists felt instinctively that the Emperor would soon recognize the South or declare the blockade ineffective, and wanted to be in a position to attack his policy. Slidell advised that the active support of some Paris journal be enlisted "in the way of editorial matter, and more especially for the free use of its columns for the dissemination of correct information of

what is passing among us,—such as our means of defense, the relative position and force of the combattants, results of battles and skirmishes, the personal superiority of our troops, and above all, the utter impossibility of reconstruction, etc., etc.” He felt that the French people were getting their reports of such matters from Federal sources and that even when correct news was received it was frequently so late that the earlier exaggerated and false reports from New York and Boston had already done their work. He thought that as several journals were already well disposed, a very moderate sum of a few thousand dollars would secure the active support of one of them. He said that it was confidently asserted and generally believed that the Federal government had spent large sums in this way.¹

On April 14, Edwin De Leon, formerly United States Consul-General at Alexandria, was sent by the Confederate State Department as a confidential agent for the purpose of influencing public opinion in Europe. He was given about \$25,000, of which he was to give \$2,700 to Henry Hotze in London. De Leon’s salary was to be \$3,000 a year. On Jan. 11, 1863, De Leon was sent another thousand pounds.²

Meantime, Henry Hotze, Confederate commercial agent and press agent at London, was not unmindful of French opinion. He did not take so optimistic a view of conditions there as Slidell, and wrote that the French public were “either wholly indifferent to the events in America or sympathise faintly with the North, partly from sentimental considerations and partly because they see in the power of the United States a counterpoise to that of Great Britain.”³

De Leon was soon in Paris. He reported that he had been in communication with Ferdinand de Lesseps, a kinsman of the Empress, and other men “friendly to us,” and that the *Patrie*, *Constitutionnel* and *Pays*, and all the semi-of-

¹ Slidell to State Dept., No. 1, Feb. 11, 1862 (Pickett Papers).

² Benjamin to De Leon, No. 1, Apr. 14, 1862; No. 3, Jan. 11, 1863 (Pickett Papers).

³ Hotze to Secretary of State, No. 7, Apr. 25, 1862 (Pickett Papers).

ficial papers were friendly. He even had hopes of securing the support of the Orleanists.⁴ He soon found himself confronted by the question of slavery, however. "Strange as it may seem there is really more feeling for the Black on this side of the channel than on the other—as the sentimental side of the French character has been enlisted in the supposed sufferings of this race. The North from the commencement of the struggle has spent money very freely in the manufacture of Foreign Opinion, especially in Paris and Brussels, where very high sums have been paid, and to counteract these influences I have been compelled to use extraordinary exertions and extraordinary means. . . ." He claimed for the South, now, the semi-official papers, some of the clerical journals before hostile, and the organs of the manufacturers and industrial classes at Lyons, Bordeaux, Havre and Rouen. Meantime he had published a pamphlet, *Le Vérité sur les États confédérés d'Amerique*, which was intended as a sort of handbook for the defenders of the Southern cause. He thus describes it: "You will observe that the ground is boldly taken in that publication, that the South is able to vindicate her own independence without Foreign assistance, and is rapidly doing so—that her resources are ample for her needs—that she has nothing to apologise for in her 'peculiar institution,' but has ever been the best friend of the black race—that the question of slavery really is not at the bottom of this quarrel—and that the negroes at the South sympathise with their Southern friends and hate and distrust the Yankees as they have good right to do." He reports that he has employed a corps of writers to keep the subject before the public, and he mentions some other persons who have labored in the press for the South—Pecquet du Bellet, Edward Gaulhac, of New Orleans, and Charles Girard, and in London, George McHenry and Hotze.⁵

In October, Hotze repeated his declaration of the spring,

⁴ De Leon to Benjamin, No. 1, July 30, 1862 (Pickett Papers).

⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 2, Sept. 30, 1862 (Pickett Papers).

that, in general, the nation, if not wholly indifferent, was friendly disposed toward the North,⁶ though in this connection it is interesting to note that three months later Slidell spoke of "an immense change of public opinion to our advantage" within the last six or eight months, and that those who had been indifferent or lukewarm were now warm partisans of the South, while the greater part of those who had sympathized with the North now admitted their error. He added, "I may safely assert that the sentiment of the intelligent classes is nearly unanimous in our favor."⁷ A year later, Hotze divided the anti-slavery prejudice into two phases, the English phase and the French phase. After discussing the English phase he turns to the French and says that this, which is "far more dangerous and difficult to deal with, is where the prejudice has passed into, or has not yet ceased to be, one of those fixed principles, which neither individuals nor nations permit to be called in question." He continues:

This is actually the case in France and Continental countries generally. There no such violent anti-slavery demonstrations are made as in England, simply because there is no one against whom to make them. Slavery is there classed with atheism, socialism, or other topics, on which, however eccentric one's views may be or however certain one is of the secret sympathy of one's hearers, it is a rule of decency and decorum not to make them the subject of argument or to obtrude them upon well-bred ears. I have entered into this seemingly uncalled-for disquisition because I fear that judging only from a distance and from outward appearances you may mistake the relative strength of the prejudice in England and in France. In the latter country it is infinitely more unanimous and unassailable. With the exception of the Emperor and his nearest personal adherents, all the intelligence, the science, the social respectability, is leagued with the ignorance and the radicalism in a deep-rooted antipathy—rather than active hostility—against us. This is what has paralyzed the wise intentions of the Emperor heretofore, and what paralyzes them still. It is much easier for the English, accustomed to a hierarchy of classes at home, and to a haughty dominion abroad, to understand a hierarchy of races than it is for the French, the apostles of universal equality and who have sacrificed so much to their creed. Few of our friends understand the full force of this fact in its bearing upon the political action of the Government. The Emperor, from the very magnitude of his power, cannot afford to offend so universal a feeling, and he cannot act as

⁶ Hotze to Benjamin, No. 13, Oct. 24, 1862 (Pickett Papers).

⁷ Slidell to Benjamin, No. 24, Jan. 21, 1863 (Pickett Papers).

he wishes unless by conciliating that feeling with some manifest and dazzling material advantage, or by creating such a situation as to give him the excuse of necessity. I regret being obliged to take a less sanguine view of our expectations from France, than may possibly reach you through other channels, but it is above all my duty to write you what I believe to be the truth in reference to the currents of public opinion.⁸

A month later, he complains at the tone of the Southern press which seems favorable to France and unfavorable to England. Writing from England, he says:

Now I am aware of the allowances that must be made for the prepossessions or prejudices inseparable from continued residence in a country, but I cannot help reiterating my earnest conviction that our only hope of permanent friendship and solid assistance is from England. What temporary relations between us and France may arise from the force of circumstances, I cannot foretell, but the fact remains clear to my mind, that here we have almost a unanimous nation as our friends, and in France, beside the Emperor and his immediate entourage, we have none. Here there is scarcely a man eminent in letters, in politics, or in society, who dares profess friendship for the North; there I cannot think of a familiar name that can be claimed for us. It is impossible to conceive of an antithesis more complete than that which exists between the public opinion of France and that of England in all that relates, directly or indirectly, to our cause. Our people see only the deceptive contrast between the diplomacy, or more properly, diplomatic manners of the two countries—a contrast rather superficial and personal than real and national, and they do not see what the instinct of the North has long discerned that the heart of England beats for us and the heart of France for our enemies.⁹

Benjamin said in reply:

Your appreciation of the tone and temper of public opinion in France in your Nos. 29 and 31, although not in accordance with the views of the other correspondents of the Department, concurs entirely in the conclusions to which I had arrived, from the perusal of the principal organs of French journalism. It has been impossible to remain blind to the evidence of the articles which emanate from the best known names in French literature. In what is perhaps the most powerful and influential of the French periodicals, "*La Revue des Deux Mondes*," there is scarcely an article signed by the members of its able corps of contributors, which does not contain some disparaging allusion to the South. Abolition sentiments are quietly assumed as philosophical axioms too self-evident to require comment or elaboration, and the result of this struggle is in all cases treated as a foregone conclusion, as nothing within the range of possibility, except the subjugation of the South and the emancipation of the whole body of the negroes. The example of St. Domingo does not seem in the least to disturb the faith of these philanthropists in

⁸ Hotze to Benjamin, No. 29, Sept. 26, 1863 (Pickett Papers).

⁹ Ibid., No. 31, Oct. 31, 1863 (Pickett Papers).

the entire justice and policy of a war waged for this end, and our resistance to the fate proposed for us, is treated as a crime against liberty and civilization.¹⁰

Meantime De Leon was not having much success, and in December, 1863, Slidell wrote to Benjamin complaining of his conduct of the mission assigned to him. De Leon had begun his service by opening some dispatches that Benjamin had given him to take to Slidell, who had delayed until this time in reporting the matter. Slidell said that he had had no difficulty before the arrival of De Leon in getting articles and news published in the papers. But De Leon, he said, so far as he knew, had not had access to or intercourse with a single public man of any consequence, that his associations with the press had been confined to two or three subalterns, and that De Leon had not, so far as he knew, rendered the slightest service to the Confederate cause in France. Moreover, whatever influence De Leon might have had, had been lost by the publication in the Federal newspapers of a letter of De Leon which had been intercepted on its way to its destination.¹¹ De Leon had said: "At the expiration of eighteen months, 'France wants money' literally, and not figuratively. They are a far more mercenary race than the English, and we must buy golded opinions from them if at all. Such was the secret of Dr. Franklin's success."¹² When this found its way into the Liberal papers, De Leon's usefulness was at an end. In view of all these things, De Leon was removed, and his work was taken up by Hotze.

Hotze said that his plan of operations differed in theory and practice from that of his predecessor. He said that he acted by means of persons rather than things, and he relied more upon "self-love, ambition, enthusiasm, admiration of our cause, and other passions, than upon the power of money." He had some doubts that the plan would succeed in France, for the French were more cynical than the English, and moreover the French journalist regarded his pro-

¹⁰ Benjamin to Hotze, No. 13, Jan. 9, 1864 (Pickett Papers).

¹¹ Slidell to Benjamin, No. 50 (bis), Dec. 6, 1863 (Pickett Papers).

¹² New York Daily Tribune, Nov. 16, 1863 (evening edition).

fession "as purely that of an advocate who earns his fee." He thought that he might approach the French public mind through the men of science, "whose position relative to the political and journalistic talent is precisely the reverse of what it is in England, and who are far advanced in correct views of the place assigned by providence to different branches of the human family."¹³ He suggested that a staff of native writers be employed to disseminate news and articles desired by the Confederacy. There is in his correspondence a letter to one Felix Aucaigne, offering to make him a Paris correspondent of the *Index*, but his duties would be confined to writing articles for the French press, using the *Index* as his guide. Hotze said that this plan had "worked wonders" in the Italian press.¹⁴

If Aucaigne was one of those who were to be won by enthusiasm, "admiration of our cause" and other passions not mercenary, it is small wonder that the Confederates were no more successful, for on March 11, 1864, this individual came to Bigelow to sell his services for the sum of \$2,000, writing for the *Patrie*. He said that his "conscience" now compelled him to support the North which was now anti-slavery enough for him. The next day he came again asking an additional \$100 a month. Bigelow refused his services, saying that the pro-Southern journals were doing the United States a real service by identifying the Southern cause with slavery, so that although the Corps Législatif was filled with people interested in dividing the Union, yet no word had been lispied, either in the Imperial address or in the reply or in the debates, in favor of the Confederates or to the prejudice of the Federals, for fear of public opinion.¹⁵

In April, Hotze said that if he had been preceded in London by an agent who disbursed large sums of money, in the manner in which they had been spent in France, he would

¹³ Hotze to Benjamin, No. 38, Mar. 12, 1864 (Pickett Papers).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 37, Feb. 13, 1864 (Pickett Papers).

¹⁵ Bigelow, *Retrospections of an Active Life*, vol. ii, p. 161, Bigelow to Seward, Mar. 11, 1864; vol. ii, p. 165, Bigelow to Seward, Mar. 24, 1864.

have met English journalists of a very different stamp from those he had found and made friends of.¹⁶ In the summer he reported that the French press was indifferent rather than hostile, that there were only two daily Paris papers absolutely hostile, at least three friendly, though languid, and the rest ready to accept the more popular side. He said that several papers had been offered to him, among them a daily Parisian paper, on various terms. But he had refused them.¹⁷ He claimed as friendly, the *Moniteur*, the *Constitutionnel*, the *Patrie*, the *Pays*, the *France*, the *Nation*, and numerous smaller papers. As opponents, he admitted the *Journal des Débats*, the *Siècle*, the *Temps*, and the *Opinion Nationale*, but thought the three former had lapsed into a quasi neutrality or at least a sullen silence. "In point of circulation then, we have at least three fourths in Paris, and probably the same in the Departments, though my estimate in this latter respect is purely speculative." He thought his system was making great progress.¹⁸

But while Hotze was making these claims, the *Phare de la Loire* was able to say that if it was mistaken on the American question, it was in such illustrious company as that of Victor Hugo, Berryer, Louis Blanc, all the economists of the school of free trade, of European democracy, and of such organs as the *Opinion Nationale*, the *Siècle*, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the *Journal des Débats*, the *Temps*, the *Nord*, the *Gironde*, the *Journal du Havre*, the *Progrès* of Lyon, the *Mémorial des Deux-Sèvres*, the *Union de l'Ouest*, the *Indépendance Belge*, and other European papers.¹⁹ To this list was added the *Courrier du Dimanche*,²⁰ and a provincial paper, the *Courrier of La Rochelle*.²¹

¹⁶ Hotze to Benjamin, No. 41, Apr. 16, 1864 (Pickett Papers).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 43, June 3, 1864 (Pickett Papers).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 47, July 29, 1864 (Pickett Papers).

¹⁹ *Phare de la Loire*, Nov. 26, 1864, E. Mangin.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Nov. 27, 1864, E. Mangin.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Dec. 1, 1864, E. Mangin. John Stuart Mill wrote to Motley from Avignon, Oct. 31, 1862, "All liberal Frenchmen seem to have been with you from the first. They did not know more about the subject than the English, but their instincts were truer" (Motley's *Correspondence*, vol. ii, p. 96). The *Saturday Review*

On the whole, the clerical party was in sympathy with the South. Said the *Phare de la Loire*: "In the American question, our ultramontaines have, with quite rare exceptions, given their sympathies to the cause of secession and slavery. The Catholic tradition compels them to it and it is only in violation of that imperious tradition that Berryer, the bishop of Orleans, and the staff of the Union de l'Ouest have pronounced very strongly against forced labor and against the Southern anarchy."²² To this may be added the evidence of the *Journal des Débats*: "It can not be dissembled that French public opinion in general and Catholic opinion have always been favorable to the cause of the South and to the cause of slavery, and men like Mgr. Dupanloup and Mr. Augustin Cochin, who dare to protest against that sinful tendency, are very rare in the Church and the Catholic party." The attitude of the Catholics was explained by the fact that they had regarded emancipation as an English and Protestant idea, associated with Biblical societies, and by the fact that while the church might not be said to have been in favor of slavery, still its idea had been charity rather than liberty, tutelage rather than emancipation. "Human nature being, in its eyes, vitiated from its origin, it is incapable of conducting itself alone, and the white race has need of leading-strings as well as the black race. The Church would say that in place of giving a negro a liberty which would be only a burden to him, and with which he would die of hunger and abandonment, it would like better to give him nourishment of soul and body, nurseries for his infancy, hospitals for his old age. Assuredly, if slavery were only what the Church desires, the slaves themselves would not desire abolition; but history answers for us."²³ The *Siècle* complained at the attitude on this question "among the

(Oct. 3, 1863) thought that a majority of the educated classes in France were friendly to the Union, and the *Spectator* (Oct. 3, 1863) thought that the cultivated portion of English society had more sympathy with the Slave Power than the cultivated portion of French society (*Rhodes*, vol. iv, p. 390).

²² *Phare de la Loire*, May 22, 1865, E. Mangin.

²³ *Journal des Débats*, May 8, 1865, John Lemoine.

upper classes, among the conservatives, among the Catholics." ²⁴

As a matter of fact, the truth seems to be that propaganda, pro-Union or pro-Confederate, had not much influence in shaping French opinion. Parties—Imperialists, and the great body of Catholics and Legitimists, on the one hand, and liberals of all shades, Orleanists, Republicans, the liberal wing of the Catholics and Legitimists, on the other—took their stand from the predilections of their own principles and the dictation of policy.

²⁴ *Siècle*, July 7, 1864, Louis Jourdan.

CHAPTER VII

THE EMPIRE IN MEXICO

There is a story about Napoleon III to the effect that once when playing a game of "petits papiers," he was asked what was his favorite pastime, and he answered, "Seeking the solution of insoluble questions." Napoleon was given to vast dreams, and a favorite field for his schemes was in the region of Central America. He had early conceived the idea of a canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. His dream of an empire in Mexico came near to bringing him into conflict with the United States. The story of his intervention in that country, and the dramatic empire of Maximilian of Austria, is a corollary to his efforts in favor of the Southern Confederacy.

It is not necessary here to go into the diplomatic and military events. The story of the foreign claims, the Jecker bonds, the Convention of London, the tripartite intervention of France, England, and Spain, the withdrawal of the two latter countries from the expedition, the slow progress of the French forces into the back country, the establishment of Maximilian's empire and its gradual decay, and the final heroic end of the deluded prince, is well known. The history of the diplomatic part played by the United States has been set forth and subjected to criticism. The part played by Napoleon's Mexican venture in French opinion, in its connection with the United States, is worthy of some further study.

There is no doubt that Napoleon's relations with the United States were dominated by considerations for the Mexican empire, and the Imperialist papers took their cue from him. This was evident enough to the English cabinet, which refused to be used by him in his plan to erect a Latin and Catholic empire against Anglo-Saxon aggression, but to a large

extent, Mexico was an unseen factor in French relations with the United States, for the censorship laws did not permit the liberals, at least through the newspapers, to say all that they thought.

At first, the Mexican expedition did not meet with great disapproval. The disrupted state of Mexico was well known, and that it was unable or unwilling to pay its just debts was clear. A plan to take over the custom houses was accepted as a proper method of dealing with the matter.¹ News of violence by Mexicans toward foreigners aroused a demand for prompt and effective repression of such acts, as there were at least five thousand French subjects there.² Even a plan for the temporary occupation of the country, while the Mexicans were left free to establish a strong government, was looked upon with favor,³ though it was seen clearly that the expedition was a challenge to the Monroe Doctrine.⁴ As a matter of fact, this purely American doctrine rankled in the breasts of even the best friends of America, and Eugene Forcade, of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, thought that the Civil War would not be entirely in vain if it gave the Americans a lesson in modesty, tolerance and humanity. It was regretted that the United States had not departed from its "vain-glorious isolation" and taken part in the expedition.⁵ The *Débats* took alarm at the number of troops accompanying the expedition, and the evident intention to establish an empire, but did not express an active opposition.⁶ There were wild reports to the effect that the expedition was intended to break the blockade of the South.⁷ The *Constitutionnel* complained that the *Presse*, *Siècle* and *Opinion Nationale* had been taken with a sudden tenderness for the Mexican republic and for President Juarez.⁸ The liberal

¹ *Journal des Débats*, Sept. 26, 1861, Louis Alloury.

² *Ibid.*, Oct. 4, 1861, Louis Alloury.

³ *Ibid.*, Oct. 9, 1861, Prevost-Paradol.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Nov. 11, 1861, J.-J. Weiss.

⁵ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xxxv, pp. 755-7, Oct. 1, 1861, E. Forcade.

⁶ *Journal des Débats*, Jan. 29, 1862, J.-J. Weiss.

⁷ *Correspondant*, vol. liv, p. 567, Nov., 1861, P. Douhaire.

⁸ *Constitutionnel*, Feb. 16, 1862, Auguste Vitu.

papers were quite willing to support an expedition which aimed at the protection of French national interests, or securing moral and material reparations,⁹ but they were not willing to support it if the purpose was to consult with the Mexican people as to the form of their government and to send armies to "facilitate their deliberations." If the purpose was, as suggested by the *Patrie*, to solve the Venetian question by offering to the Hapsburgs the throne of the Montezumas in return for Venetia, the *Siècle* thought that would be going a long distance.¹⁰

On Mar. 13, there came up in the Corps Législatif an amendment to the Address, reading: "We see the beginning of the Mexican expedition with regret. Its purpose appears to be to intervene in the internal affairs of a nation. We call upon the government to pursue only the reparation of our grievances." This amendment was supported by Jules Favre, Hénon, Darimon, Ernest Picard and Émile Ollivier, the same deputies (the "Cinq") that had introduced the first amendment in regard to the civil war, on the same day.¹¹

The course of events in Mexico was foretold with great exactness by Taxile Delord. The overthrow of the present government would lead to the establishment of another government by France, the expedition would be converted into an intervention, the intervention into occupation. From that there would come complications in the new world and dangers which might have their effect in the old world.¹² The *Presse* feared that the expedition would lead, not only to difficulties in Mexico, but to complications with the United States and the peoples of Hispanic America.¹³

It was not long before the English and Spanish troops were withdrawn, and the French troops came into conflict with the Mexicans before Puebla. The *Constitutionnel* was

⁹ *Presse*, Feb. 17, 1862, A. Peyrat.

¹⁰ *Siècle*, Feb. 1, 1862, Taxile Delord.

¹¹ Corps Législatif, Mar. 13, 1862.

¹² *Siècle*, Apr. 20, 1862, Taxile Delord.

¹³ *Presse*, May 20, 1862, A. Peyrat.

able to raise the cry that the honor of the flag was engaged, and the *Débats* thought its argument merited "special attention,"¹⁴ but the Liberal journal stressed the point that the expedition was limited to the reparation of French grievances,¹⁵ and expressed the belief that the fall of Puebla might be considered the termination of the expedition.¹⁶

As early as June, 1862, it had been reported in the papers that the United States had negotiated a treaty, providing for a loan to Mexico, with a mortgage on some of the provinces of Mexico.¹⁷ This was looked upon as an attempt by the United States to secure more territory from Mexico which could not pay its debt. In February, 1863, when another amendment unfavorable to the Mexican expedition was being discussed, Baron Jérôme David said that the United States had conquered a third of Mexico and now they wanted the remainder. He referred to Buchanan's message of 1858, proposing a temporary protectorate of the United States over Chihuahua and Sonora, and his message of 1859, asking if the United States should permit Mexico to destroy itself. Jules Favre, speaking for the amendment, issued the warning that if the government continued in its present course, it would find itself in conflict with the United States and fighting side by side with the South.¹⁸ The *Débats* suggested that the Mexican expedition, and the spectacle of France disputing with the Anglo-Saxon race the heritage of the Spanish republics in dissolution, would arouse the anxiety of England, which would encourage a war between France and the United States which would bring an end to the extension of French influence.¹⁹

A common argument in favor of the expedition was the necessity of placing a barrier against the spirit of encroachment which animated the Southern states. Thus, it might

¹⁴ *Journal des Débats*, June 14, 1862, Louis Alloury.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, July 7, 1862, L. Alloury.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, June 13, 1863, L. Alloury.

¹⁷ *Siècle*, June 24, 1862, Taxile Delord.

¹⁸ *Corps Législatif*, Feb. 6, 1863.

¹⁹ *Journal des Débats*, July 3, 1863, J.-J. Weiss.

be argued that the North had a real interest in the success of the Mexican expedition. "The object of the North, which reproves slavery and desires to prevent its extension, will be attained, if, under the temporary patronage of the allied powers, Mexico constitutes itself in a stable manner, for the adventurers of the South, knowing what reception would be given thenceforth to their aggressions, would give up their project of dismembering it to make of its fragments new slave states incorporated into their group. What would it matter to the North if it drew back the limits of the republic? The territory that it possesses is so vast that, however ambitious, one could be contented with less." If a limit were drawn to the extension of slavery, while at the same time the Monroe Doctrine was respected and Mexico remained an independent power, the United States would have no cause for complaint but much cause for satisfaction.²⁰ At the same time there were some who wanted France to recognize the South and unite it with Mexico in one Confederation.²¹ Prevost-Paradol said that the conquest of Mexico would have the inevitable consequence of bringing about sooner or later a war between France and the United States, a result that would fill all the enemies of liberty in the world with joy. These "enemies of liberty" were now advocating intervention in favor of the South in order to assure, by the dissolution of the United States, the security of the new empire. This eminent publicist even asserted that the Southern Confederation could not exist without Mexico, and if France should be so blind as to lend its aid to the establishment of the slave Confederation and unfortunate enough to succeed in that design, the new state would not be long in astonishing the world with its ingratitude. If the Union should be restored, it would not submit to the occupation of Mexico by European arms and the establishment of a monarchy under the protection of France. The United States could no more

²⁰ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xxxviii, p. 915, Apr. 15, 1862, Michel Chevalier.

²¹ *Correspondant*, vol. lvii, pp. 449-462, Oct., 1862, H. Mercier de Lacombe.

permit such an occupation by France, than France could permit the occupation of Morocco by England and the calling in of some prince to reign under its influence.²² Prevost-Paradol thus saw the Monroe Doctrine in its true light, as merely a protective policy on the part of the United States, a policy adhered to by all states. Bigelow wrote to Seward about this time that the hostile papers were circulating reports of dispatches and speeches made by Seward to the French government, in which he asserted the determination to stand by the Monroe Doctrine, a position which Bigelow said was very unpopular in France. As a matter of fact, Bigelow was himself an opponent of this doctrine.²³ The attitude of so friendly a paper as the *Journal des Débats* has been seen. The *Presse* was not behind in denunciation of the Monroe Doctrine. "The United States, which proclaimed it, obeyed secret desires that various attempts at annexation have betrayed." It was only because it loved the freedom of the transatlantic republics that it lamented to see that liberty soiled by such a doctrine which did not suppress intervention but only restrained it to a single state.²⁴

In September, the *Revue des Deux Mondes* became remarkably outspoken in its criticism of the policy of the French government. Referring to the Mexican expedition, it said: "Certain frivolous and reckless spirits would like . . . to change an eccentric expedition into a system of permanent hostility toward the republic of the United States. If those ideas had only appeared in anonymous brochures, we should be little disturbed at it. Unfortunately, they coincide with the tendencies of the policy of our government. . . . Our government, since the beginning of the civil war in America, has shown an unfortunate partiality for the secessionist party. . . . In attempting to found an em-

²² *Courrier du Dimanche*, Aug. 23, 1863, letter of Prevost-Paradol.

²³ Bigelow to Seward, Aug. 28, 1863, *Retrospections of an Active Life*, vol. ii, pp. 45-47.

²⁴ *Presse*, Sept. 2, 1863, G. Jauret. See also *La France*, Sept. 2, 1863, J. Cohen.

pire in Mexico, it is unfortunately true that we are creating gratuitously an antagonism between American patriotism and France." It was admitted that the civil war probably would give France time to establish a Mexican empire. But when the war was over, either the armies would be turned against the infraction of the Monroe Doctrine, or individuals from the armies would enlist against France without government sanction. The question, then, confronting France was whether it should put off the conflict until it had time to withdraw from Mexico, or provoke a conflict now, a conflict in which victory would be fatal to France, since it would destroy one of the strongest and most useful of the creations of France. It was hoped that the Mexican journals published under French patronage would not speak of the recognition of the South by Mexico, and that France would be relieved from the expedition by the acceptance by Maximilian of the crown of Mexico.²⁵

On January 25, 1864, in the Corps Législatif the following amendment was proposed by the liberals: "We see with regret the government persist in the Mexican expedition. We can not be a party to that ruinous enterprise, and we are the interpreters of public opinion in demanding that it be brought to an end immediately."

Guérout took this occasion to introduce a letter of the Emperor to General Forey, which gave as reasons for the expedition the erection of a barrier against encroachments of the United States to the south, and the establishment of a market and source of supplies for France.²⁶

²⁵ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xlvii, pp. 487-490, Sept. 15, 1863, E. Forcade.

²⁶ In the letter, Napoleon said:

"Il ne manquera pas de gens qui vous demanderont pourquoi nous allons dépenser des hommes et de l'argent pour fonder un gouvernement régulier au Mexique.

"Dans l'état actuel de la civilisation du monde, la prospérité de l'Amérique n'est pas indifférent à l'Europe, car c'est elle qui alimente nos fabriques et fait vivre notre commerce. Nous avons intérêt à ce que la république des États-Unis soit puissante et prospère, mais nous n'en avons aucun à ce qu'elle s'empare de tout le golfe du Mexique, domine de là les Antilles, ainsi que l'Amérique du Sud, et

Guérault said that the idea of placing the Latin and Catholic races as a barrier before the Anglo-Saxon and Protestant races was certainly a grand political idea but he doubted its practicability. The expedition, he said, would never have been undertaken if there had been no civil war in the United States, and it was evident that the creation of an empire would not be agreeable to the North. Hence, it had been hoped and counted on that the scission between the North and South would be accomplished. "That desire became so lively that persons deceived themselves, and, you recall, all the French press favorable to the government showed itself singularly favorable to the cause of the South to the point of estranging the North; and you recall that last summer the discontent of the North had reached such a point that a Russian fleet, anchoring at New York, was received with such great enthusiasm that there could be seen in it a certain irritation against France." The position of France was all the more unfortunate as it was the enemy of slavery, which was the cause of the secession. Moreover, if the South had won, it would not have been the sincere friend of Mexico, for the filibustering expeditions were of Southern origin. But in any case, the civil war in the United States was only temporary. Like all wars it would have an end, and then the republic or republics of the United States would look askance at the establishment of a monarchy on their frontiers.

soit la seule dispensatrice des produits du nouveau monde. Nous voyons aujourd'hui, par une triste experience, combien est précaire le sort d'une industrie qui est réduite à chercher sa matière première sur un marché unique dont elle subit toutes les vicissitudes.

"Si, au contraire, le Mexique conserve son indépendance et maintient l'intégrité de son territoire, si un gouvernement stable s'y constitue avec l'assistance de la France, nous aurons rendu à la race latine, de l'autre côté de l'Océan, sa force et son prestige; nous aurons garanti leur sécurité à nos colonies des Antilles et à celles de l'Espagne; nous aurons établi notre influence bienfaisante au centre de l'Amérique; et cette influence, en créant des débouchés immenses à notre commerce, nous procurera les matières indispensables à notre industrie.

"Le Mexique, ainsi régénéré, nous sera toujours favorable, non-seulement par reconnaissance, mais aussi parce que ses intérêts seront d'accord avec les nôtres et qu'il trouvera un point d'appui dans ses bons rapports avec les puissances européennes."

Then the United States, without declaring war, without engaging in a direct combat with France, might permit fifty thousand volunteers to go to Mexico.²⁷ The next day, Thiers expressed the fear that fifty or a hundred thousand adventurers would leave for Mexico after the end of the civil war, and opposed further complications in Mexico.²⁸ The *Débats* subscribed to the opinions of Guérout, and hoped that the troops would be withdrawn, not immediately, not within twenty-four hours, but as promptly as was consistent with dignity and the security of those who had become allies of France.²⁹

The Imperialist papers tried to minimize the danger from the United States. The *Revue Contemporaine* said that France had no reason to fear the Monroe Doctrine in Mexico, for that would not apply when France did not desire sovereignty in that country.³⁰ The *Constitutionnel* reminded its readers that the Monroe Doctrine, in the exaggerated consequences applied to it by its commentators, called for the hegemony of the United States over all of America, while before the war a political school had been growing up in New York and Washington which aimed at the arbitration by the United States of the affairs of Europe, which the most ardent among them complaisantly proclaimed in decadence.³¹ The friendly tone of Davis' message of 1863 toward Mexico was commented upon,³² and it had been reported that Richmond was illuminated when it received news of the taking of Puebla.³³ It also ridiculed Berryer who seemed to be in fear of displeasing the American Union and of drawing its anger upon France.³⁴ But while the *Constitutionnel* took this tone of hostility to the North and pointed out the

²⁷ *Corps Législatif*, Jan. 25, 1864.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Jan. 26, 1864.

²⁹ *Journal des Débats*, Jan. 27, 1864, Louis Alloury.

³⁰ *Revue Contemporaine*, vol. lxix, pp. 612-613, Aug. 15, 1862, J.-E. Horn.

³¹ *Constitutionnel*, Dec. 18, 1862, Édouard Simon.

³² *Ibid.*, Dec. 26, 1863, H.-Marie Martin.

³³ *Ibid.*, June 23, 1863, Auguste Vitu.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Jan. 28, 1864, Paulin Limayrac.

friendliness of the South, it insisted that the United States had no desire to prevent a neighbor nation from giving itself a government of its own choice. The resolution of the House of Representatives of April 4, 1864,³⁵ gave this paper some difficulty, but it pointed out that a resolution of the House of Representatives had no validity.³⁶ This resolution of the House of Representatives was said by the *Débats* to be nothing more than the expression of the position that the United States had taken from the beginning.³⁷ The official *Moniteur* said that the vote merely expressed a certain distrust that had been caused by the favorable results of the Mexican expedition, but its importance should not be exaggerated. The resolution of the House of Representatives could have no practical value, and the Senate had recognized this by adjourning without taking it up. It was said to be only a political move taken in view of the coming presidential election, or a concession to the prejudices of the masses.³⁸ The *Presse* at first took the position that the vote had no importance,³⁹ but another writer the next day expressed the contrary opinion, that the resolution was in reality a warning to be taken into serious consideration. "The European governments do not take the American character enough into consideration. They are wrong! Peril is not avoided by closing the eyes; it is by opening them and opening them soon enough."⁴⁰ The *Phare de la Loire* said that the existence of the young empire depended upon the dispositions of

³⁵ This was a joint resolution upon which the Senate took no action. It declared that the Congress of the United States were unwilling by silence to leave the nations of the world under the impression that they were indifferent spectators of the deplorable events now transpiring in the republic of Mexico, and that they therefore thought fit to declare that it did not accord with the policy of the United States to acknowledge any monarchical government erected on the ruins of any republican government in America under the auspices of any European power (*Congressional Globe*, 38th Cong., 1 Sess., p. 1408).

³⁶ *Constitutionnel*, Apr. 26, 1864, Paulin Limayrac.

³⁷ *Journal des Débats*, Apr. 27, 1864, L. Alloury.

³⁸ *Moniteur*, Apr. 27, 1864. See also *La France*, Apr. 23, 1864, J. Cohen.

³⁹ *Presse*, Apr. 21, 1864, G. Jauret.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Apr. 22, 1864, Émile de Girardin.

the United States, and that if the Union came out triumphant from its domestic struggle it would be a disquieting neighbor for Maximilian I,⁴¹ but the attitude of the new sovereign toward the Confederates, it said, would probably determine the attitude of the United States toward the Mexican Empire.⁴²

In a long article entitled, "The United States and Mexico," in the *Constitutionnel*, Paulin Limayrac attempted to minimize the danger from the United States. Jules Favre in the *Corps Législatif* had dwelt upon this phase of the matter as a reason for withdrawal from Mexico, and in particular had referred to Seward's dispatch of September 26, 1863, expressing the opinion that the people of Mexico desired a republican form of government. The *Constitutionnel* answered that it was not to be deduced from the Monroe Doctrine that an American state was to be debarred from choosing any form of government that it liked, and that the assertion of Mr. Seward had been disproved by the facts. Whatever the admirers of the republican form of government might say, it was no longer possible to deny today that Mexico preferred the monarchical form. It was admitted that Mr. Seward was in good faith when he expressed the opinion that Mexico was sincerely republican, and that he had left it to Mr. Dayton to suggest on occasion that the establishment of a monarchy in Mexico might be the source of difficulties with France. But he had spoken in the hypothesis that the monarchical form would really be repugnant to the Mexican nation, and accepted only under force. France did not have to defend itself against the accusation of having overthrown a republican government in the name of the monarchical principle, against the will of a people, and the United States had no intention of overthrowing a monarchy in the name of their republican principle, when the monarchy had been accepted by the people. This had been affirmed in Seward's dispatch of October 23, 1863.

⁴¹ *Phare de la Loire*, May 9, 1864, *Ev. Mangin*.

⁴² *Ibid.*, May 11, 1864, *Ev. Mangin*.

Mr. Seward, said the *Constitutionnel*, had been very conciliatory and had said that he would refuse recognition to a government the establishment of which depended upon the eventualities of war. It was repeated that the recent declaration of the House of Representatives need be given little importance as the Senate had adjourned without action, and the cabinet at Washington had upon its own initiative made frank and categorical explanations. It was not believed that after the Civil War the United States would support bands of former United States soldiers for the republican army in Mexico, for if the division of the country resulted from the war, the North would be too far away from Mexico, and the South, after the victory, would be glad to stay at peace; if the South were defeated in battle but not conquered, there would be a long military occupation which would absorb all the resources of the North; and if the Union were restored on its old basis, the North would use all the means in its power to prevent extensions which would only serve to augment the power of the South. As a matter of fact, Mexico, well organized, would be a great market for the United States. "The American people is a proud people, and we do not pretend that it ever places its interests above its honor, but when it has comprehended all that it has to gain from the new state of things without any real injury to its legitimate pride, it is intelligent enough to renounce purile susceptibilities that its government was forthwith wise enough not to unduly excite, despite certain American orators and certain French orators who insist upon representing the irritabilities of a moment as irreconcilable animosities."⁴³

Commenting upon this article on the following day, the *Siècle* said that the credulity of the *Constitutionnel* was going beyond bounds when Seward's dispatch of October 23,

⁴³ *Constitutionnel*, May 16 and 17, 1864, Paulin Limayrac. See also *La France*, Sept. 4, 1863, J. Cohen, and Sept. 15, 1863, P. Sylvestre.

1863, was invoked as evidence of the good will of the government at Washington.⁴⁴

The *Moniteur* of July 5 commented upon the calm with which America had received the news of the arrival of Maximilian in Mexico, as a sign of the calming of the public mind, "which it is not without interest to point out."⁴⁵ Liberals continued to speak of the danger from America. The *Débats* commented upon the irritation in the North against France, due to the Mexican expedition, and the irritation in the South against France for not having granted recognition. It was feared that the two parts of the Union would come to terms and join in an enterprise which would give satisfaction to both, and seal their reconciliation in the overthrow of the Mexican empire.⁴⁶ The *Presse* commented upon the substitution in a bill of the title "Mexican republic" for "Mexico," by the Senate of the United States, and referred to an article in the *Richmond Enquirer* which spoke of the possibility of troops from both sides marching under the same flag against the invaders of Mexico, and an article in the *London Index* which spoke of the inconsistency and even treason of the French government and asserted that it would choose its own hemisphere as against Europe.⁴⁷ It was reported that the initiative had been taken in the conference at Hampton Roads by the Confederate commissioners, in the proposition to unite to put the Monroe Doctrine into practice against foreign influence in America.⁴⁸

As the Civil War drew to a close there was a change in the position taken by many of the Liberals. During the last few months, the *Journal des Débats* was not even second to the *Constitutionnel* in publishing numerous articles tending to show that there would be no trouble with the United States, and the *Revue des Deux Mondes* took the same posi-

⁴⁴ *Siècle*, May 18, 1864, Émile de la Bédollière.

⁴⁵ *Moniteur*, July 5, 1864.

⁴⁶ *Journal des Débats*, Feb. 3, 1865, F. Camus.

⁴⁷ *Presse*, Feb. 4, 1865, Georges Jauret.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Mar. 5, 1865, Eugène Chatard.

tion.⁴⁹ Such a paper as the *Presse*, however, continued to issue warnings of trouble with the United States. The most serious fear was that if the United States did not declare war, it would permit men who had served in its armies to enroll in the armies of Juarez. It was an undoubted satisfaction to the *Journal des Débats* to note the fears of the journals who had supported the Confederate loan, and praised the acts of the Confederate cruisers, that now similar relations would be established between the United States and the government of Juarez, and financial aid would be given in that country to the republicans of Mexico, while cruisers would depart from ports of the United States armed with authority from Juarez to prey upon the commerce of his enemies.⁵⁰ In the *Corps Législatif*, where another amendment unfavorable to the expedition was offered in 1865, Jules Favre feared that the United States, released from civil war, would, without any violation of treaties, permit a horde of adventurers to cross its frontiers,⁵¹ while Rouher, speaking for the government, professed his faith in the good dispositions of the United States.⁵²

It would appear from the above that up to almost the close of the war, the Liberals had issued repeated warnings that if the French troops were not withdrawn from Mexico, there would be trouble with the United States, while the Imperialists expressed a belief that the United States had neither the intention nor the desire to interfere. As the war approached its end, the leading Liberal organs went over to the position of the Imperialists, while a part of the Imperialist press showed considerable nervousness about the matter.

That the Imperialists should have minimized the danger from the United States does not agree with a report of Dayton to Seward in the fall of 1863, in which he says that

⁴⁹ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. lvi, p. 1064, Apr. 15, 1865, E. Forcade.

⁵⁰ *Journal des Débats*, May 29, 1865, Prévost-Paradol.

⁵¹ *Corps Législatif*, April 10, 1865, June 8, 1865.

⁵² *Ibid.*, June 9, 1865.

in a conversation with Drouyn de l'Huys, "reference was made to the almost universal report that our government only awaits the termination of our domestic troubles to drive the French out of Mexico. This idea is carefully nursed and circulated by the friends of secession here, and is doing us injury with the government." He said that the French naturally concluded that if they were to have trouble it would be safest to choose their own time.⁵³ This statement of Dayton has been accepted as expressing the true condition of things, but it does not harmonize with the opinions expressed in the leading journals, for as has been seen, it was the most devoted friends of the Union, not the friends of secession, who had warned the government of its danger. But Dayton's observation no doubt applied to the section of opinion that placed the success of secession above that of the Mexican expedition.

As a matter of fact, the danger of conflict with the United States was only one of the reasons for French withdrawal from Mexico. The great drain upon the country's resources, the loss of life, the actual failure of the expedition to accomplish its purpose, and the complications of European politics were all potent factors. This study of the relation between the Mexican expedition and the war in America, as revealed in public opinion, would give a very distorted view of the attitude of the public mind toward the Mexican expedition if it were not carried in mind that this was only one of the phases under discussion.⁵⁴

⁵³ Dayton to Seward, No. 345, Sept. 14, 1863.

⁵⁴ This matter is discussed in Annual Report of the American Historical Assoc., 1902, vol. i, pp. 315-328, "Reasons for the Withdrawal of the French from Mexico," by Clyde Augustus Duniway.

CHAPTER VIII

FROM GETTYSBURG TO THE CLOSE OF THE WAR

The Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg were of course heralded as great victories by the friends of the Union in France, but the *Journal des Débats* pointed out that the inability of Northern generalship to plan a campaign far in advance was probably the only thing that prevented the complete destruction of Lee's army, and Mead's victory had saved the Capital without anything having been done to render impossible the return of the Gauls.¹ The *Constitutionnel* admitted the Northern successes, but said they were amply counterbalanced by the intestine differences of the North, such as the disorders in New York, in which many persons were killed. The civil war, it said, is not only between the North and the South, but it is declared in the home of the Federals.² It was remarked that in the riots in New York the negroes were particularly the object of the fury of the uprising. No surprise, therefore, need be felt that the negroes of the South did not respond to the decrees of emancipation by putting themselves under the protection of the Federal flag.³ The ingenuity of the staff of the *Constitutionnel* came to its rescue on August 3, when Lee's defeat was presented as evidence of the equilibrium between the two armies, for this was the fourth time, it said, that the Confederates, invincible on their own territory, had failed in their offensive plans. This proved that a war of that kind did not have any issue, neither of the two parties possessing at present or being able to procure the necessary military power to defeat the other. It, therefore, placed little importance on Lee's retreat, and said that the

¹ *Journal des Débats*, July 21, 1863, J.-J. Weiss.

² *Constitutionnel*, July 27, 1863, Joncières.

³ *Ibid.*, July 28, 1863, Louis Couture.

momentary advantage of the Federals had turned their heads; that now the Herald of New York was proposing to continue the conscription and to profit from the recent happy course of things to declare war on France and England.⁴ As a matter of fact, it was argued that the North could not win without conscription and this was not to be depended upon, for it was contrary to all Anglo-Saxon precedents. It was admitted that the law was not likely to be declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, for article 2, section 2, of the Constitution says that the President shall name the members of that court, with the advice of the Senate, while article 3, section 1, adds that they are named "during good behavior" (*pour tout le temps qu'ils se conduisent bien*), in other words, for so long a time as those who have the right to change them do not cease to be able to count upon them. But the real test would come when the President tried to conscript three hundred thousand new soldiers for a war which no one longer desired.⁵

In another article it was said that the end of the North was conquest, the forced submission of the states of the South. No value could be placed upon the pretension of re-constituting the Union, for union between sovereign states implied the free and continuous consent of each of them. The Union had thus already been destroyed in blood. Conquest had failed. The North would not be willing to spend the men and money needed for a prolonged and indefinite war to be followed by a period when the exhausted South must receive pecuniary aid, and the draft opposition indicated an unwillingness to serve in the war. Moreover, the North had tried to invade the South four times and had been defeated each time, while the South had tried and failed twice.⁶ And so, even if Lincoln should find the soldiers he wanted, what catastrophes and ruins there remained for America! what sufferings yet for the industry of Europe.⁷

⁴ Ibid., Aug. 3, 1863, Auguste Vitu.

⁵ Ibid., Aug. 14, 1863, Louis Couture.

⁶ Ibid., Aug. 15, 1863, H.-Marie Martin.

⁷ Ibid., Aug. 19, 1863, A. Grenier.

That emancipation was not the end of the war was proved by Lincoln's letter to the editor-in-chief of the Tribune. The emancipation proclamation was not intended to benefit the blacks, but to stir up a slave rising. Moreover, the military authorities had treated the black regiments as cannon food—at Ft. Wagner and Port Hudson the negroes were sent before, and when they drew back from the artillery fire of the enemy they were driven back by the Federal soldiers at the point of the bayonet.⁸

About this time the Confederate ship, *Florida*, was admitted to the port of Brest for repairs, and the *Débats* took occasion to vent its opinions on the Confederate naval policy, as follows:

The *Phare de la Loire* has raised on that subject complaints that we find well founded. It would be well, indeed, if it were possible, to interdict access to our ports to veritable sea-robbers, for the *Florida* is nothing else. Now we believe that that is possible. The rights of belligerents have without doubt been conceded to the Southern States, but it is evidently on condition that they conform to the rules of international law. Now, if it is possible strictly to sustain that the Southern States have the right to arm privateers, since they have not acceded to the Treaty of Paris, it is not possible to admit that privateers armed by the South, assimilated by a tolerance too generous with ships of war (one sees that clearly today), may substitute themselves validly for maritime tribunals and make themselves judges of the validity of their prizes. They have not the right to stop ships that they meet on the seas, as they do, to take possession of the cargo, whether it belongs to Americans of the North or to neutrals, and to burn the ship, while a naval captain, wearing the uniform of his country, and offering many other guarantees of uprightness and impartiality, would be obliged to conduct his prize before a court of justice. Evidently that is intolerable. It is in vain that the Southerners allege that their ports being blockaded, they have not maritime tribunals. That is their affair and not ours. That they should attack American ships of war and that they should oblige them to raise the blockade, that is their right; but to take possession of the goods of others without legal judgment, that in all tongues, is called robbery.

We do not know if it is true, as is claimed, that the *Florida* has seized merchandise belonging to neutrals, that it has burned the *Southern Cross*, going from Magatlan to Marseilles with a cargo of dye woods belonging to a Frenchman, that it has stopped a three-masted French ship, the *Fleurida-Para*, in order to leave on it persons made prisoner from burned ships. But if all those facts are correct, we think with the *Phare de la Loire*, that "the entrance of the privateer to Brest offers to the French authorities an excellent occasion to obtain justice for its griefs and to inflict for the injuries caused to our commerce a chastisement so many times merited."

⁸ Ibid., Aug. 25, 1863, H.-Marie Martin.

Jefferson Davis' notification that he would give letters of marque contained the statement that the officers must obey the laws of the Confederate States and their instructions. "It appears, therefore, evident that this is not a question of some exceptional cases, but that those privateers, in committing such misdeeds, obey their instructions, and that is a thing that Europe is justified in not tolerating."⁹ The right of the Confederate ships to burn Federal vessels without taking them to a prize court had been questioned before this, and the *Siècle* had suggested that the right of belligerency should be denied to a state which even granted letters of marque.¹⁰ This paper said that as the *Florida* had entered Brest "unarmed and unequipped" she should not be permitted to rearm and add new equipage.¹¹ The semi-official papers, of course, took the other point of view. The position of the government was settled by the *Moniteur* which finally announced that the *Florida* was not a privateer but a part of the Confederate marine, its officers furnished with regular commissions, and with all the character of an ordinary warship.¹² As for the questions raised by the opposition papers as to the right of a privateer to burn or sink prizes, the *Constitutionnel* said that without "seeking to apologize for a measure which certainly ought to be considered as exercising too rigorously the rights of war carried to their extreme limits," that even French law permitted such acts in more or less urgent cases.¹³

The news of the reception given in New York to the officers of the Russian squadron then visiting that port gave the Liberals an opportunity to refer to the sagacity of Russia which was wise enough to so conduct itself as to gain the gratitude of the Americans, a sagacity which, by inference, the French government did not possess.¹⁴ As a matter

⁹ *Journal des Débats*, Sept. 3, 1863, L. Alloury.

¹⁰ *Siècle*, June 13, 1863, T.-N. Benard.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Sept. 8, 1863, T.-N. Benard.

¹² *Moniteur*, Sept. 16, 1863.

¹³ *Constitutionnel*, Sept. 13, 1863, Paulin Limayrac.

¹⁴ *Journal des Débats*, Oct. 17, 1863, J.-J. Weiss.

of fact the friends of Poland were much alarmed by the fear that Russia would be successful in winning the friendship of America, and that that country would place its hand in the bloody hand of Russia.¹⁵

But while the Liberals dwelt upon the friendship between the United States and Russia, the Imperialists could indulge in expositions of the growing enmity between the United States and England. It was a common thing to predict that at the end of the war the United States, or what was left of it, would attempt to annex Canada. On October 22, the *Constitutionnel* argued that whether the government at Washington was successful or not in the present war, sooner or later it would find itself incapable of resisting the popular pressure. If the North should win, it would be impossible to restrain the soldiers, puffed up with victory and imbued with the idea that they ought to procure vengeance for the hostile or merely indifferent attitude of England. If the North should lose, the Federal government itself would be tempted to seek to the north compensation for the losses sustained to the south.¹⁶

By the end of the year 1863, even the Liberals were losing hope that the United States would be maintained and the institution of slavery, so odious to them, abolished. Almost a year before, the *Journal des Débats* in perhaps its only admission of any doubt as to the ultimate triumph of the Union, hearing of a Union defeat before Vicksburg, the loss of Springfield, Missouri, another defeat in Texas, had confessed its despair. "What possesses the Union! it has enemies in Europe that it can only disarm by prompt victories. The republic of the South, for reasons that we have developed more than once, is, we believe, a pure impossibility; no defeat of the Federals will establish it. But the Union must not permit it to be believed, by too frequent reverses, that it has become as impossible as the slave republic."¹⁷ Where the *Débats* faltered once, others lost hope.

¹⁵ *Siècle*, Oct. 30, 1863, Léon Plée.

¹⁶ *Constitutionnel*, Oct. 22, 1863, H.-Marie Martin.

¹⁷ *Journal des Débats*, Jan. 25, 1863, J.-J. Weiss.

This was particularly true as they saw, or thought they saw, the Union losing the liberties which made it attractive to them. Under the stress of war a despotism seemed to be growing up on the ruins of American liberties. The arrest of Mr. Vallandigham was much dwelt upon, and to Liberals it seemed like a repetition of the arrest of Émile de Girardin by order of General Cavaignac.¹⁸ The Liberals could reconcile themselves more to Confederate success when the continuance of the war was leading to things like this. Just before Gettysburg, the *Presse* had said that the reunion by force of the separated States was becoming more impossible each day. The struggle was no more than a work of destruction inspired by a savage obstinacy. There remained nothing more but to trace out the boundaries.¹⁹ At the same time, the *Siècle* reached the conclusion that unfortunately it was probable that slavery would survive the war, though it would have received a blow that would be fatal in the end.²⁰ In October, the *Presse* asserted that union was an "almost chimerical" hope. Union could be brought about only by the toleration of slavery, and the South could maintain its independence, if victorious in the war, only by the abolition of slavery.²¹

On the other hand, the Imperialists were beginning to admit that slavery stood in the way of sympathy for the South. On September 14, the *Revue Contemporaine* admitted that "slavery has contributed enormously to the prolongation of the struggle in depriving the South of that moral concourse that opinion, and in the long run diplomacy, usually pay to peoples who carry on sustained efforts in the interest of their autonomy. If Europe has refused, and still refuses, to recognize the government of Mr. Jefferson Davis, which offers all the marks and all the guaranties of a government *de facto*, it is only because the public conscience seems to forbid that European governments concur in any way in the

¹⁸ *Presse*, June 8, 1863, Eugène Chatard.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, June 24, 1863, Eugène Chatard.

²⁰ *Siècle*, June 27, 1863, Louis Jourdan.

²¹ *Presse*, Oct. 29, 1863, Eugène Chatard.

foundation and consolidation of a State which is based upon slavery. The day when an energetic resolution of the government at Richmond causes that cause of estrangement to disappear, nothing will be in the way of the recognition of the Confederation.”²² This admission by one of the most consistent supporters of the South showed that it had given up the hope by this time of securing aid to the South without the abolition of slavery, and gives greater significance to those negotiations which it has been suspected were connected with the mysterious mission of Duncan F. Kenner.²³ Not long after this, it was reported in the English newspapers that Vice-President Stephens of the Confederate States was expected to go to Paris with powers to conclude a treaty with France containing a clause which would provide for the abolition of slavery. The *Siècle* said that if that was true his mission would be a failure, for the time for recognition was passed. In arming negroes and speaking of abolition, the South was merely demonstrating that it was at the end of its resources, and its concessions would not secure the sympathy of liberal Europe.²⁴

Early in the new year there were signs of increased Imperialist activity. On January 12, there appeared in the semi-official *Patrie*, an article that gave considerable annoyance to the representatives of the United States and corresponding satisfaction to the Confederates. It was entitled “Russia and the United States of America,” and its inspiration was the visit of the Russian squadron to New York. An analogy was drawn between the situation in the United States and that in Russia. In both countries the “sacred precepts of humanity” were trampled under foot in a succession of massacres and pillages. A number of atrocities by Federal troops were mentioned and compared with conditions in Poland. Butler’s New Orleans order was placed beside Muraviev’s ill treatment of Polish women. Confis-

²² *Revue Contemporaine*, vol. lxx, p. 207, Sept. 14, 1863, J.-E. Horn.

²³ See Callahan, *The Diplomatic History of the Southern Confederacy*, chap. xi.

²⁴ *Siècle*, Oct. 2, 1863, Taxile Delord.

cations of property by the United States and by Russia were compared. "The existence of the Union, as well as the integrity of the Russian Empire can not be maintained except by frightful massacres. Let us cease then being indignant toward Butler and Berg, toward Schenck and Annenkoff. They are only the instruments of a superior will, or better, of a fatal policy." The solution was simply to demand of Lincoln and the Czar that they renounce an impossible repression, and accord complete independence to Poland and the Confederacy. This solution was called for not only by humanity but by justice. "Is it right that fifty million Muscovites should unite to retain ten or twelve million Poles under a detested yoke? Is it right that twenty million Northerners, Germans and Irishmen should unite to impose upon eight million Southerners an association that they spurn?" If violence should triumph on either continent, it would be a shame to have remained impassive before the consummation of the iniquity, as well as a blow at the independence and interests of Europe. The familiar arguments were used to show that slavery was not the issue in America, and the danger was pointed out of America coming out of the war with subjected provinces and a warlike spirit, threatening Canada, the French Antilles, and Spanish America. The Patrie, therefore, had only disdain for those, who, in the presence of events that threatened to compromise the equilibrium of the world, would abandon Poland and withdraw the troops from Mexico.²⁵ The article was signed by the proprietor, Delamarre, who informed Slidell that the article had "not only been inspired by the Emperor but had been examined and approved by him before its publication" and that "his communications had been directly with the Emperor without the intervention or knowledge of any of the ministers." This statement seems to have been confirmed by Mocquard, chef du cabinet of the Emperor. Slidell said that all this was "more encouraging than anything which has occurred here for several months," although

²⁵ Patrie, Jan. 12, 1864, Delamarre.

he entertained no sanguine hope of any early action.²⁶ Malespine, of the *Opinion Nationale*, organ of the Prince Napoleon, also said this article was ascribed to Imperial hands.²⁷

Meantime, information was being circulated in Paris that did not get into the newspapers.²⁸ As early as September, 1863, John Bigelow had secured documents proving that the Confederates were building war vessels in France for their navy. The documents were presented to the French foreign office by the American minister, Dayton. Although these vessels were ostensibly being built for private use in "the Chinese and Pacific seas, between China, Japan, and San Francisco," with a contemplated eventual sale to the governments of China and Japan, there is no doubt now that Napoleon understood the true purpose of the ships, and Bigelow knew that the ministry of marine could not have been deceived by the alleged purpose when the permission to build and arm the ships was granted. It would not do, therefore, to leave the matter to the secret processes of diplomacy, and Bigelow decided to appeal from the government to the people of France. The first step toward this was to procure from Antoine Pierre Berryer, a Liberal though a Legitimist, member of the *Corps Législatif*, and perhaps the foremost lawyer in France, a formal written opinion reciting the facts and setting forth the provisions of laws and decrees which had been violated, the parties involved, and the legal procedure necessary to secure punishment. This opinion was sent to the *Opinion Nationale* and it had been set up in type and was ready for the press when notice was received from the Minister of the Interior that publication would not be permitted. Bigelow was not surprised at this, though he had hoped that it might succeed in getting into print. He

²⁶ Slidell to Benjamin, No. 53, Jan. 14, 1864 (part of this is from a penciled translation from code in the Pickett Papers).

²⁷ *Retrospections of an Active Life*, Bigelow, vol. ii, p. 133.

²⁸ On the Confederate ships built in France, see Bigelow, *France and the Confederate Navy*, and *Retrospections of an Active Life*, and Bulloch, *Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*.

made it a point after this to mention the incident to everyone who would understand the significance of the matter, and continued his efforts to get the story of the Confederate ships before the public until in January the opportunity seemed to present itself. He learned early in that month that an amendment to the Address, supported by Arman, the ship-builder who had contracted for the Confederate ships and a member of the Corps Législatif, would be brought up in a few days. This amendment read: "We are united in the hope of seeing realized the good results foreseen by your majesty, and we pray that a friendly mediation may finally accomplish the reconciliation of the various states of the American Union, for which the interests of the people and of European commerce more loudly call."²⁹ It was arranged that when this amendment was called up Arman would be questioned about the ships he was building, and thus afford an opportunity to bring the facts before the public through the published reports of the debates. When the proposed amendment was reached in the ordinary order of business, however, it was passed over without having been brought up for discussion. The government evidently had thought it best to keep quiet for a while. Through the *Opinion Nationale*, however, Bigelow finally got the documents into print, and in an article of April 30, Arman and the government were indirectly charged with having conspired against a friendly power. This was the only Parisian daily to discuss the matter. The government passed the word to the Imperialist papers not to mention it, and the opposition papers were intimidated by circulating the report that the *Opinion* was being prosecuted in the courts

²⁹ Bigelow, "France and the Confederate Navy," p. 31. In the Confederate diplomatic papers, there is in manuscript an amendment, bearing the names of Arman, Conseil, Dettheil, Jubinal, Piccioni, the Comte de Las Cases et de Parien, to the Address of this year, reading: "Nous nous associons par suite à l'esperance de voir réaliser les bons résultats prévus par Votre Majesté, et nous formons aussi des vœux pour qu'une médiation amicale puisse enfin amener, entre les anciens États de l'Union américaine, une conciliation que réclament chaque jour davantage les intérêts de ces peuples amis, et ceux du commerce européen."

by Arman for having published the article. The *Phare de la Loire*, however, a provincial paper, published at Nantes, was not silent,³⁰ and its interest continued up to the fall of that year when it cast suspicion upon the final transfer of one of the ships to the Prussian government.³¹ As a matter of fact, only one of the six ships built in France ever flew the Confederate flag. This vessel, an iron-clad ram, the delivery of which to the Confederacy had been prevented by an order of the French government, variously known as the *Sphinx*, the *Stoerkodder*, the *Olinde* and finally as the *Stonewall*, seems to have been contracted for by the Danish government but was turned back to the builders after reaching Copenhagen and then passed into the possession of the Confederate government. It reached the Confederacy, however, too late to be of service.³²

Even as late as the summer of 1864 there were rumors of interference in American affairs. It was reported that Leopold I, of Belgium, father-in-law of Maximilian of Mexico, had departed for Vichy to confer with Napoleon as to common action toward the United States. These reports were not taken very seriously, however, and the *Phare de la Loire* suggested that in return for European mediation, Lincoln might propose solutions for the Polish, Roman and Venetian, Italian and Schleswig-Holstein questions.³³

In November came the news of the seizure of the Florida in the harbor of Bahia, Brazil. The act was condemned by practically all the papers. The *Journal des Débats* called it a brutal violation of the sovereignty of Brazil and a flagrant violation of the rights of neutrals.³⁴ Dayton said that the accounts published in all the European papers, the *Moniteur* among the rest, made it out to be a gross outrage on Brazil, committed after express warning from her authorities, and an

³⁰ *Phare de la Loire*, May 1, May 14, June 2, 1864.

³¹ *Ibid.*, Sept. 11, 12, 1864, E. Mangin.

³² Bulloch, *Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*; Bigelow, *France and the Confederate Navy, and Retrospections of an Active Life*.

³³ *Phare de la Loire*, July 26, 28, 1864, E. Mangin.

³⁴ *Journal des Débats*, Nov. 14, 1864, Ernest Dottain.

express promise on the part of the United States consul to respect the neutrality of the port. He thought that if the facts were correctly stated, it would have been better for the United States if the Florida had remained in the hands of the Confederates.³⁵ The *Phare de la Loire* was an exception. It praised the captain for his energetic conduct toward the "pirates, whose glorious mission consisted in burning unfortunate merchant ships at sea," as "amply justified by a long series of audacious deeds at the charge of the Confederates."³⁶

The friends of the Confederacy were pinning their hopes on the next presidential campaign in the Northern States. As early as March the *Constitutionnel* was repeating and apparently accepting as true, statements to the effect that Lincoln was using the presidential office to further his own political ambitions, ordering military expeditions with the object of influencing the next election, and to the same end proposing the organization of rebel states where one-tenth of the electors should take the oath of allegiance to the United States.³⁷ It was said that McClellan did not want to cease efforts to force the South to submit, but he was opposed to the arbitrary measures of the central government, while among the Democrats a large number desired the end of a deplorable war which was dangerous to liberty.³⁸ On the eve of news of the results of the election it was admitted that Lincoln probably would be chosen, for he had the advantage of being in power, and the states of Louisiana, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri would be controlled by the military authorities, while Nevada would bring three votes to him.³⁹ The *Journal des Débats* argued that the fate of the United States did not depend upon the election, for McClellan would not, if elected, consent to secession.⁴⁰ Lin-

³⁵ Dayton to Seward, No. 560, Nov. 8, 1864.

³⁶ *Phare de la Loire*, Nov. 12, 1864, Mangin.

³⁷ *Constitutionnel*, Mar. 27, 1864, H.-Marie Martin.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Aug. 29, 1864, H.-Marie Martin.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Nov. 21, 1864, H.-Marie Martin.

⁴⁰ *Journal des Débats*, Sept. 14, 1864, F. Camus.

coln represented the courageous party which saw in the present war an opportunity to settle the question of slavery, and which desired the maintenance of the Union, while McClellan represented the party which desired the reestablishment of the Union, but which would not draw back from any sacrifice to bring peace, and which considered the emancipation proclamation illegal and regrettable.⁴¹ As for McClellan's objection to conscription, loans, and abuses and misery of all kinds, the *Débats* said that if he had found the secret of doing without them, he had been wrong in not revealing that admirable secret to the central government. It was pointed out that George Pendleton, the candidate for Vice-President, was accused of favoring a new confederation of the West.⁴² The Liberals had more respect for McClellan than they had for his party, which they regarded as the party of peace at any price. "The election of a Democratic candidate is the last chance upon which the Confederates count; the reelection of Lincoln would take away all hope from them,"⁴³ and they were united behind the letter of Agénor de Gasparin, which was to appear in the New York papers on election day, urging the reelection of Lincoln, to secure the maintenance of the Union, peace and the abolition of slavery.⁴⁴

The news of the election of Lincoln was a relief and a joy to the Liberals. The *Journal des Débats* said:

There are indeed few events in contemporary history which have as much importance and which should leave so deep a trace as the reelection of Mr. Lincoln in the United States. As we remarked about a month ago, it is the first time that a people in possession of universal suffrage has been called to pronounce directly and finally for or against the continuation of a painful war. None of the nations of the old world has yet been submitted to such a test, no government has yet been reduced to try it. . . . In electing Mr. Lincoln by a sweeping majority, the American people has given to the world a not unexpected, but very remarkable proof of intelligence and patriotism. It has shown, first, that the federative form did not prevent the national sentiment from developing quite quickly

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Sept. 16, 1864, Prévost-Paradol.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Oct. 4, 1864, Prévost-Paradol.

⁴³ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. liii, p. 766, Oct. 1, 1864, E. Forcade.

⁴⁴ *Siècle*, Nov. 6, 1864, Louis Jourdan.

in the United States and from throwing out roots deep enough to carry it through the roughest experiences. It has proved, moreover, that it can choose with discernment the executors of its will and it has not permitted itself to be deceived by appearances; it has, finally, pronounced in a solemn manner upon the main point of the struggle, declaring on the one hand to the entire world that the Union would not perish and announcing on the other hand to the South that it must submit sooner or later or succumb.⁴⁵

Thus the great Liberal editor rejoiced in the triumph of democratic institutions. The *Revue des Deux Mondes* was pleased with the orderly progress of the election "in the midst of the freest competition of parties," and no doubt felt that liberalism had scored a point in that the war had not "deranged the mechanism of the noble and glorious republican constitution of the Union." It seemed that the American people had been guided in that great ordeal by a veritable instinct of national preservation. There had been fears for four years for the fate of the American republic. "The cause of liberty, of democracy, of human progress, is so unfortunate in this second half of the 19th century, that one might fear at times that it was threatened by a new disaster and condemned to see the work of Washington crumble in a premature downfall. The attitude that the American people has just taken is calculated to console, reassure and encourage in Europe the friends of liberty. Modern Europe and the young American republic have often reacted one upon the other in the vicissitudes of their revolutions. Persuaded that those reciprocal influences of one people upon the other ought to become more and more active, we accept the great manifestation of the American people as a happy augury of the awakening of generous ideas on our old continent."⁴⁶

Soon after the election, a curious theory was promulgated in Imperialist circles, the *Patrie* being seemingly the center of disturbance. According to this doctrine, the manner of Lincoln's election should lead to a recognition of the Confederacy, for while in his first election all the States of the

⁴⁵ *Journal des Débats*, Nov. 27, 1864, Prevost-Paradol.

⁴⁶ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. liv, pp. 751-60, Dec. 1, 1864, E. Forcade.

Union had taken part, and he had, therefore, in that case been the chosen president of the nation as a whole, in this election not all of the States had taken part and therefore Lincoln had not been chosen president of the whole country. He should be recognized only as president of the States that had taken part in his election, and the Confederacy should be recognized as a separate nation. It was even suggested that the French government had approached the English government on this question. The *Revue des Deux Mondes* brushed this aside as casuistry and chicanery.⁴⁷

The *Siècle* passed it by with a sarcastic reference to the *Patrie*.⁴⁸ The *Phare de la Loire* asked if the *Patrie* thought that the recognition by Europe of the Emperor of Mexico was a mistake, since his domination did not extend over the whole country, though the liberal paper was careful to explain that it did not intend to draw an impossible comparison between the position of Maximilian and Mr. Lincoln. The *Opinion Nationale* argued that even if the separatist states had taken part in the election and voted against Lincoln, still he would have had more than an absolute majority of the electoral votes.⁴⁹ The theory of the *Patrie* may have been a curious political proposition rather than a serious proposal with chances of realization, but it evidently caused some stir among the opposition.

The war was now fast approaching its end. With the Confederacy almost at the point of defeat, the *Richmond Enquirer*, which was supposed to reflect the ideas of Jefferson Davis, was quoted as saying that if emancipation could assure recognition and the guaranty of Southern independence by France and England, the people would not hesitate. There had been rumors of such proposals before.⁵⁰ The latest move of the Confederacy was accepted as an admission of defeat.⁵¹ The *Siècle* said that if the South had desired

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. lv, pp. 543-4, Jan. 15, 1865, E. Forcade.

⁴⁸ *Siècle*, Dec. 3, 1864, Taxile Delord.

⁴⁹ *Phare de la Loire*, Nov. 24, 1864, E. Mangin.

⁵⁰ See above, p. 136.

⁵¹ *Phare de la Loire*, Jan. 17, 1865, E. Mangin.

to isolate its cause from that of the partisans of an odious exploitation, it should have been beforehand with the measure of humanity and not simply have resigned itself to it.⁵²

By April 19, the *Constitutionnel* had come to the conclusion that the war was over, but the troubles of the North, it said, were only begun. It was impossible to think that after such a war the Confederates would make a complete submission, and the occupation of the South would be as expensive as the war had been. Moreover, the paper emancipation had not solved the question of what to do with the negro, who was incapable of working under a free system.⁵³ However, on July 4, it was admitted that the question of state sovereignty had been settled by force of arms.⁵⁴ The *Pays* was just as reluctant to admit that the war was over. It predicted "guerilla warfare—terrible, merciless, and of which it is at present impossible to foresee the end."⁵⁵ To the *Revue Contemporaine* belongs the distinction of having proved the impossibility of the old. The prophets of this magazine predicted that the Republicans, puffed up with their victory and warned by their present experiences, would strengthen the Federal authority and sacrifice the autonomy of the States to the interests of the central government, while the South and the Northern democrats would combat energetically for the maintenance of local liberties. If the Republicans should be successful, the United States, deprived of its liberties, would proceed gradually toward a military despotism. If the Democrats should be successful, and the already loose bonds of the central government were still further loosened, then at the least shock, at the smallest conflict, the great republic would be dissolved, peacefully but irrevocably. Really, the *Revue Contemporaine* didn't see any good in such a large country with the prospect of an

⁵² *Siècle*, Jan. 21, 1865, Émile de la Bédollière.

⁵³ *Constitutionnel*, Apr. 19, 1865, Joncières.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, July 4, 1865, H.-Marie Martin.

⁵⁵ *Pays*, Apr. 16, 1865, L. Chauret. Translation from *Amer. Dip. Cor.*, 1865, part 2, p. 282.

enormous population, being under one government anyway.⁵⁶

Liberals, however, accepted the fall of Richmond as marking the end. The *Débats* then passed this judgment: "Thus comes to an end, after four years of battles, one of the most cruel wars of modern times, and one of the most deplorable ones, considered not by its results (since it will have as a necessary consequence, whatever the issue, the destruction of slavery), but by its immediate causes. The obstinacy, the haughty covetousness of a few men loosed that scourge upon the American continent. It is those, it is those blind and badly counseled men from the point of view of their own interests, who bear the heavy responsibility of the blood that has been spilt."⁵⁷ The *Opinion Nationale*, discussing the fall of Richmond, said: "America will continue to flourish in liberty, and to give to the Old World an example which it cannot long continue to disregard or reject. Another cause, also, a cause dear to civilization, to justice, and to humanity, triumphs with the North—it is the cause of abolitionism. The colored race may rejoice now. Its fetters are forever broken. The African is a freeman in the free republic of the United States. . . . Let us, then, return a fitting homage of praise and thanksgiving to the men who in the New World so well deserve the thanks of humanity, progress, and liberty."⁵⁸ The *Temps* testified that it had never, even in the darkest times, entertained any doubt as to the final result. Not only were the resources of the North superior, "but the faith we have in the destinies of humanity warned us that Washington's work should not perish, and that the great American republic would pass triumphantly through this ordeal. The trial was deserved, for they had tolerated slavery; but if history has any meaning, if it records anything beyond the action of blind forces, they were to come out of it victors. God forbid that we should insult

⁵⁶ *Revue Contemporaine*, vol. lxxix, pp. 867-870, Apr. 30, 1865, Alexander Peÿ.

⁵⁷ *Journal des Débats*, Apr. 16, 1865, F. Camus.

⁵⁸ *Opinion Nationale*, Apr. 16, 1865. Translation from *Amer. Dip. Cor.*, 1865, part 2, p. 280.

the fallen! They defended heroically, with might and main, a cause which they believed to be just. But they were wrong. They had departed from the path of justice. We should respect their misfortune; we should have compassion on it; but we must also rejoice over their defeat, for their victory would have been a misfortune to humanity.”⁵⁹

But though the Liberals were thus decided in their denunciation of the Confederacy, they were equally insistent that American democracy justify itself in clemency to the defeated. “However unfortunate may have been the error of the Southern states, we have the firm hope that the Union will open its arms to the people of the South with a magnificent spirit of conciliation. We have faith in the generous impulses of peoples inspired by a good cause triumphant.”⁶⁰ The *Débats* hoped that even if there were not a complete amnesty granted, that the penalty, even for the chief of the Confederation, Jefferson Davis, would not be too severe, and that in thus following a policy of magnanimity the Civil War of the United States would be given “that unique character of grandeur and generosity that it has kept up to the present. If that victorious democracy, irritated by the most shameful outrage, adds, as we warmly desire, that extraordinary example of moderation to the various lessons which it has given us for four years, it will have done what no monarchical or republican government has yet done.” But the *Constitutionnel*, *Patrie* and other journals were ridiculed for not being satisfied that men, who, as said the *Débats*, had dismembered their country, invoked foreign aid, and spilled rivers of blood, should simply be permitted to return to their homes. They were demanding extraordinary clemency for the civil leader of the rebellion. “Do they desire beyond this, that he should be acquitted with eulogies? Should he be given a pension, or made an ambassador?”⁶¹ Nevertheless, the Liberal paper

⁵⁹ *Temps*, Apr. 16, 1865, A. Nefftzer. Translation from *Amer. Dip. Cor.*, 1865, part 2, p. 281.

⁶⁰ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. lvi, p. 510, Mar. 15, 1865, E. Forcade.

⁶¹ *Journal des Débats*, May 29, 1865, Prévost-Paradol.

was not satisfied with Johnson's "pardon," which did not go far enough. It was feared that the United States was starting on a career of revenge and oppression.⁶²

It remained for the Corps Législatif to speak its last word upon the war. The discourse of the Crown and the "projet" of the address to the Crown had both neglected to say anything in regard to the American war. On April 15, 1865, an amendment was brought up, offered by Bethmont, Carnot, Dorian, Jules Favre, Garnier-Pagès, Glais-Bizoin, Guérault, Havin, Hénou, Lanjuinais, J. Magnin, Marie, E. Pelletan, E. Picard, and Jules Simon, reading:

We have proclaimed, from the beginning, our sympathies for the northern states of America.

Thanks to heroic efforts, slavery is abolished. We shall be happy to see the powerful Republic of the United States, the natural ally of France, reestablished, and we shall hail with joy a triumph which will have cost nothing to the cause of liberty.

Eugène Pelletan tried to speak in favor of this amendment, but he was interrupted by frequent cries of "Aux voix," and the like, and he was forced to desist. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 195 to 24.⁶³ Bigelow says that Pelletan was prepared for a long speech, but the news of Lee's flight reached the members a few moments before he began, and the majority did not want American relations with France discussed.⁶⁴

The tragic death of Lincoln brought expressions of sorrow and praise of his character from everywhere. Bigelow was besieged in his house, receiving deputations of students and others who had come to express their sympathy and sorrow. They became so demonstrative that the police had to interfere and only very limited numbers were permitted in the streets. It was said that three thousand of them would have united in a formal expression of their feelings had the police not intervened. Some even were sent to prison for expressing their feelings intemperately. Bigelow counted sixteen policemen from his window, patrolling

⁶² Ibid., June 13, 1865, F. Camus; June 15, 1865, Ernest Dottain.

⁶³ Corps Législatif, Apr. 15, 1865.

⁶⁴ Bigelow, *Retrospections of an Active Life*, vol. ii, pp. 480-481.

the neighborhood. He says: "I had no idea that Mr. Lincoln had such a hold upon the heart of the young gentlemen of France, or that his loss would be so properly appreciated."⁶⁵ Organizations of all sorts from over France sent testimonials of their sympathy.⁶⁶ Shortly after Lincoln's death, Laboulaye was making an address on the subject of Benjamin Franklin, at the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers, and he took occasion to speak of Lincoln. "Never in my life as a professor have my words awakened so much sympathy. Three times in succession the hall applauded with an enthusiasm which was not for the speaker, but for the noble victim of a cowardly assassin."⁶⁷ His life and the drama in which he had been so prominent an actor were proof that America was not the country of prose, of the worship of the Dollar. Who could tell of a tragedy comparable to the life and death of Lincoln?⁶⁸ Said the *Siècle*, "Lincoln will remain the austere and sacred personification of a great epoch, the truest expression of democracy."⁶⁹ Some Liberal papers started a popular subscription of ten centimes to buy a medal to be presented to the widow of Lincoln, but it had not reckoned with the law. The subscription was stopped by the police.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Bigelow to Seward, No. 86, Apr. 28, 1865; Taxile Delord, *Histoire du Second Empire*, vol. iv, p. 16.

⁶⁶ These testimonials were published in a supplementary volume (vol. iv) of the *United States Diplomatic Correspondence for 1865*, along with testimonials from other countries. In vol. ii for 1865 is one from "The French Committee of Emancipation," provisionally composed of the Duke de Broglie, Guizot, Laboulaye, Augustin Cochin, Audley, Prince de Broglie, Leopold de Gaillard, Charles Gaumont, Leon Lavedan, Henry Martin, Guillaume Monod, Count de Montalembert, Henry Moreau, E. de Pressensé, H. Wallon, and Cornelis de Witt (Bigelow to Seward, No. 96, May 19, 1865).

⁶⁷ Bigelow, *Retrospections of an Active Life*, vol. ii, p. 526.

⁶⁸ Charivari, May 5, 1865, Paul Girard.

⁶⁹ *Siècle*, Apr. 28, 1865, Henry Martin.

⁷⁰ Bigelow, *Retrospections of an Active Life*, vol. iii, pp. 53-54; Taxile Delord, *Histoire du Second Empire*, vol. iv, p. 17.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The assassination of Lincoln marks the end of an epoch. During the last four years of war, the "American question" had not yielded prominence in the great French journals to the important developments then taking place in Italy, in Poland and in Germany. The interest displayed by the newspapers, particularly those of Liberal sentiments, is surprising. Almost from the beginning, the Imperialists were, not the friends of the South but the enemies of the Union. Still it is not to be supposed that the South received support purely from motives of policy. A great people united in a struggle for independence could not fail to awaken sympathy at a time when the doctrine of nationality had taken such a hold upon the French people. Neither could the heroism, the military qualities of the Southern troops, and the quiet suffering of the women at home, fail to awaken admiration in what is perhaps the greatest military nation of modern times. Prevost-Paradol, one of the most brilliant of French editors, reviewing French opinion during the war, says:

Everyone among us then took sides, and each enrolled himself morally in one or the other of the two armies according to the habits of his mind and the inclinations of his heart. A large number of Frenchmen have contracted in the midst of our sterile revolutions and after so many deceptions, a sort of general aversion to democracy and for them the probable fall of that Republic was not without comfort. Still others, friends of democracy, but of democracy, disciplined, conducted by a single master, or rather incarnate in a chief, saw with no less joy the approach of a dissolution which would give proof to their theories and show once more that democracy can not exist on this earth except in resigning itself not to be free. Fashion, the spirit of imitation, the presumed interest of our Mexican enterprise came to aid those sentiments, and the South was so little in default of partisans among us, that some days ago the news of the taking of Richmond was saluted by a cry of sorrow in the midst even of our Corps Législatif.¹

¹ He refers to the cry of "Tant pis" that was raised when the defeat of the South was announced in the session of April 15.

On the other hand, the political instinct which interested enlightened Frenchmen in the maintenance of the American power, becoming more and more necessary to the equilibrium of the world, the desire to see a great democratic state surmount that terrible experience and continue to give the example of the most complete liberty combined with the most absolute equality, the need, finally, of conveying somewhere a sympathy, an admiration, a hope, to which the old world offered too little nutriment, assured to the cause of the North numerous friends, jealous of maintaining at least in that matter, the political tradition of France and the liberal spirit of our nation. We were among those. . . .²

A writer in the *Journal des Débats* in explanation of the generally favorable attitude toward the South which, he believed, was taken in France, said that it was like the preference for the Cavaliers as against the Roundheads, and was a curious mixture of patriotism, chivalry and military spirit. As Louisiana had once been a colony of France, they had imagined that all the separatists were of French ancestry. The undoubted bravery of the Southern troops had appealed to their military spirit, and with many Frenchmen the abolition of slavery appeared to be an English importation, the suppression of the slave trade seemed inseparable from the right of visit, and in defending the liberty of the blacks abolitionists were in danger of being accused of following the lead of England.³ To this should be added the opinion of the great Catholic historian and statesman, Montalembert, written just after the close of the war: "I do not say, please God, that all friends of the south are enemies of justice and liberty; still less do I say that all partisans of the north ought to be regarded as truly and sincerely liberals. But I say that an instinct, involuntary perhaps, all powerful and unconquerable, has at once arrayed on the side of the proslavery people all the open or secret partisans of the fanaticism and absolutism of Europe. I say that all the open or secret enemies, political or theological, of liberty, have been in favor of the south."⁴

² *Courrier du Dimanche*, May 10, 1865, letter of Prévost-Paradol.

³ *Journal des Débats*, May 8, 1865, John Lemoine.

⁴ *Correspondant*, May, 1865, v. lxxv, pp. 5-53, Ch. de Montalembert. This is a long and eloquent statement of the Liberal view of the principles involved. It is translated in full in *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Bigelow to Seward, No. 110, May 31, 1865.

The war ended, Liberals could rejoice that slavery was abolished, and their American democracy maintained, and maintained, too, without the production of the military dictator that pessimists had thought must come.⁵

There can be no doubt that the South received much sincere sympathy in France, a sympathy that was fostered by all the powerful organs of the government, and shared, perhaps, in a passive way by the great masses of the supporters of Napoleon. Still, the determining issue was slavery. Few Frenchmen could excuse human servitude, and Liberals could regard it only with horror. It is true that their conception of the institution as it existed in America was a picture of only its worst side, but Liberals were quick to seize upon the essential principle, and to them this was the all in all. To them, slavery was an unalloyed evil, a lingering remnant of barbarism, crass materialism carried to its ultimate conclusion. Convinced that it was to uphold this institution that the South had gone to war, their sympathies could lie only with the North, and it was an additional satisfaction to believe that in the victory of the Union the ability of a democracy to maintain its existence had been established.

⁵ *Courrier du Dimanche*, May 14, 1865, letter of Prévost-Paradol.

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INDEX

- Abolition, proposed by South, 136, 144-145. See Slavery.
 Abolitionists, 17-18.
 Address of Emperor. See Napoleon III.
 Address to Emperor. See Projet d'adresse.
 Algerian cotton, 63-64.
 Anglo-French understanding, 42-43.
 Arman, 70-71, 98, 139-140.
 Armistice, 87 ff.
 Aucaigne, Felix, 111.
 Beckwith, 34.
 Benjamin, on the French press, 109-110.
 Berryer, Antoine Pierre, 138-139.
 Bigelow, John, 15, 34, 53, 138 ff.
 Billault, 68.
 Black, J. S., 37.
 Blockade, 20, 66, 88, 104.
 Boissy, Marquis de, 68, 98.
 Brown, John, 26.
 Buchanan, James, 20, 22, 27, 35.
 Butler, Gen. B. F., 80-81, 136-137.
 Campaign of 1864, 141-143.
 Canada, 19, 41, 134.
 Canal, between Mississippi Valley and Atlantic, 23-24.
 Catholics, 11, 113-114, 151.
 Causes of the war, 22 ff., 42, 65, 132.
 Censorship, 14, 65.
 Channing, William Ellery, 10.
 Commerce destroyers, 67, 132-133.
 Commerce of South, 23-24.
 Commercial treaty, 61.
 Confederacy and Mexico, 18-19, 123.
 Confederate ships, 138-140.
 Constitution, Montgomery, 10.
 Constitution, United States. See Secession.
 Constitutionnel, character of, 10, 26, 74, 101.
 Corps Législatif, 14, 60, 68-71, 98-100, 117-118, 121-123, 128, 139, 148, 150-151.
 Cotton, manufactories in South, 24; burnings, 73, 75-76. See French interests in war.
 Cotton loan, 104.
 Cuba, 19.
 Davis, Jefferson, 24, 94.
 Dayton, W. L., 38, 43, 138.
 Decree of Nov. 24, 1860, 14.
 De Leon, Edwin, 106-107, 110.
 Democracy, 14-15, 23, 29-31, 70, 143, 145-147, 150-152.
 Democratic party in the United States, 17.
 De Tocqueville, Alexis, 9.
 District of Columbia, municipal system of, 16.
 Emancipation. See Slavery.
 Emancipation proclamation, preliminary, 85; final, 95.
 England, and armistice proposal, 89, 92-93; attitude of, 109.
 English cabinet, 76, 87, 100-101, 104.
 Faulkner, C. J., 37.
 Filibustering, 32, 118-119, 122.
 Florida, the, 140-141.
 France (newspaper), character of, 104.
 French interests in war, 32-34, 43, 46-47, 50, 56 ff., 70-71, 74-75, 84, 90, 93.
 French press, attitude of, 112.
 Garibaldi, 34-35.
 Gasparin, Agénor de, 31.
 Gettysburg, battle of, 130.
 Guérault, 15.

- Hampton Roads conference, 127.
 Hotze, Henry, 106 ff.
 Hughes, Archbishop, 11, 12.
 Hugo, Victor, 10 n.
- Immigrants, European, 30.
 Imperialists, 10, 26, 114, 128-129, 134-135, 150.
 Index (newspaper), 105.
 Industrial crisis. See French interests in war.
 Intervention. See Mediation.
 Issues of war, 9 ff.
- Johnson's pardon, 148.
 Journal des Débats, character of, 11; internal discord in South, opinion of, 18.
- Kenner, Duncan F., 136.
- Laboulaye, Édouard, 149.
 Laurens, Henry, 51, 53.
 Law of nations, 40 ff., 72-73.
 Legitimists, 114.
 Lemercier, Anatole, 99.
 Leopold I of Belgium, 140.
 Lesseps, Ferdinand de, 106.
 Liberal Empire, 14.
 Liberals, 10, 13-14, 17, 20, 26, 31, 65, 78, 105, 114, 128, 134-135, 147-148.
 Lincoln, Abraham, 16, 22, 25-27, 35-36, 77, 85, 94-95, 132, 142-144, 148-149.
 Lindsay, in House of Commons, 81-82, 103.
 Livre Jaune, 15.
 Louisiana cession, 99.
- McClellan, George B., 141-142.
 Mann, A. Dudley, 36.
 Mason, James M., 40 ff.
 Maximilian of Mexico, 121 ff. See Mexico.
 Mediation, 43, 45-46, 65 ff., 95-97.
 Mercier, 71-72.
 Mexico, 16, 19, 101, 115 ff., 118, 122 ff., 140, 150.
 Missouri Compromise, 22-23, 27.
 Monde, character of, 11.
 Monetary disturbance, 63.
- Monroe Doctrine, 94, 119-120, 127.
 Montalembert, Ch. de, on the war, 151.
 Morny, Count de, 36.
- Napoleon, Prince Imperial, 37.
 Napoleon III, 68, 71, 76, 87, 95-97, 103, 105, 115, 121-122, 137.
 Negroes, treatment of, by North, 130, 132.
- Opinion Nationale, character of, 37, 138.
 Orleanists, 11, 37, 105, 107, 114.
 Orleans princes, 45.
- Patrie, makes comparison between North and South, 10-11; character of, 37-38.
 Pays, character of, 10, 30, 43.
 Persigny, 26, 38, 96-97.
 Press, attitude of United States toward articles in, 38-39. See Censorship.
 Prévost-Paradol, 13.
 Privateering, 19. See Commerce destroyers.
 Projet d'adresse, 67-71, 98-100, 148.
 Propaganda, Confederate, 105 ff.
- Reclus, Élisée, 11.
 Recognition of Confederacy, views on, 38, 43-44, 47-48, 52, 79, 81, 87 ff., 100 ff.
 Republican Party, in United States, 17, 22, 26.
 Republicans, of France, 12, 37, 52, 105, 114.
 Riots in New York, 130.
 Roebuck, motion for recognition of Confederacy in House of Commons, 100 ff., 103.
 Rost, P. A., 36.
 Russia, 89, 93, 133-134, 136-137.
- Sanford, Henry S., 34.
 Scott, Gen. Winfield, 53.
 Secession, legality of, 25, 27-30, 73-74; possibilities of success of, 18-22, 84-85, 131, 134.
 Sénat, 14, 60, 67-68, 98.
 Seward, William H., 38.

- Siècle, character of, 12, 52.
 Silk, 58 ff.
 Slavery, 9-14, 19, 22-25, 27-30, 37, 73-74, 76, 84-86, 92-94, 105, 107-110, 113, 130, 132, 135-136, 146, 148, 151-152. See also Emancipation Proclamation, Abolition Proposed by South, and Abolitionists.
 Slidell, John, 40, 76, 105 ff.
 Société du Prince Impérial, 60.
 South Carolina, 17.
 Southern nationality, 23.
 Stone fleet, 65-66.
 Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 10, 45.
 Sumter, Fort, 19.
 Tariff, 26-27, 30, 32-33, 42, 69.
 Thouvenel, 38, 45, 52.
 Trent, the, 40 ff.
 Uncle Tom's Cabin, 10.
 Union, thought impossible, 145.
 Vollandigham, 135.
 Walewski, Count, 38.
 Washington, George, 25.
 Western States, 18, 100.
 Wheat, 33, 56-57.
 Wilkes, Capt., 40 ff.
 Wilmot Proviso, 30.
 Yancey, W. L., 36, 77.
 Yellow Book. See Livre Jaune.

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